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Security Council

Fifty-first Year

Provisional

3705th Meeting

Wednesday, 16 October 1996, 10.30 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Martínez Blanco	(Honduras)
Members:	Botswana	Mr. Legwaila
	Chile	Mr. Larraín
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	Egypt	Mr. Elaraby
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Germany	Mr. Henze
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Cabral
	Indonesia	Mr. Wisnumurti
	Italy	Mr. Ferrarin
	Poland	Mr. Matuszewski
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Park
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Weston
	United States of America	Mrs. Albright

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

Letter dated 8 October 1996 from the Representatives of Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/1996/838)

96-86514 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

Letter dated 8 October 1996 from the representatives of Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/1996/838)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Afghanistan, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Japan, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Ghafoorzai (Afghanistan) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Shah (India), Mr. Campbell (Ireland), Mr. Kharrazi (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Owada (Japan), Ms. Arystanbekova (Kazakstan), Mrs. Eshmambetova (Kyrgyzstan), Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan), Mr. Çelem (Turkey), Mrs. Ataeva (Turkmenistan) and Mr. Vohidov (Uzbekistan) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received a letter dated 15 October 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Guinea to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that the Security Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Ambassador Engin A. Ansay, Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations, during the Council's discussion of the item entitled 'The situation in Afghanistan'."

That letter has been issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/1996/852.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 to Mr. Engin Ansay.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item of the agenda. The Security Council is meeting in response to the request contained in a letter dated 8 October 1996 from the representatives of Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, document S/1996/838.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to the following documents: S/1996/810, note verbale dated 30 September 1996 from the Permanent Mission of Kazakstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General; and document S/1996/842, letter dated 9 October 1996 from the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan addressed to the President of the Security Council.

The first speaker is the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, His Excellency Mr. Abdul Rahim Ghafoorzai, whom I welcome and on whom I now call.

Mr. Ghafoorzai (Afghanistan): Allow me at the outset, on behalf of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, to express my appreciation to you, Sir, and to the members of the Security Council for convening this meeting, which beyond any doubt is reflective of a deep international concern over the heart-breaking situation in our homeland, the root of which is embedded in foreign intervention.

Let me particularly thank the delegations of Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan for requesting that this meeting be convened.

For four consecutive years, our neighbour, Pakistan, has been acting as an obstacle to the return of peace and normalcy to our war-shattered homeland through a series of conspiracies and schemes. It is because of this that our nation is turning to this Council. Our nation is turning this way because the Security Council is the highest

source of hope for peoples oppressed, occupied and invaded. The Council is entrusted with the responsibility and the task of preserving peace and security, regional and international.

It is natural for us to voice an objection, whenever we want to discharge our responsibility as concerned members of this global family, when we see peace and stability endangered, in howsoever remote a corner of the globe, and the life and prosperity of a nation jeopardized through a multifaceted and multipolar conspiracy orchestrated by military-industrial magnates from abroad. That is the case of Afghanistan today.

What is expected of this Council is that it judge events, as required by the United Nations Charter and recognized principles of international law, and to take appropriate measures. Its remaining silent towards open and naked aggression, and its deviation from principles which 51 years ago earned the commitment of many nations, would be a blow to the essence of the United Nations ideals. I am confident that everyone here shares these views. Indifference towards these blatant encroachments and violations of the human rights of the people of Afghanistan would take us back to an era when the motto "might is right" ruled, when the cry of oppressed nations was not heeded and when the strongest and the richest alone decided on the future of the planet.

Allow me once again to refer to the main cause of continued conflict in Afghanistan, a cause which unfortunately the United Nations could not effectively challenge.

For the past three years, delegations of the Islamic State of Afghanistan have complained to the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council about the continuation of foreign intervention in Afghanistan. Today, we do so again. Unfortunately, the measures taken by the United Nations have been limited to the adoption of resolutions and the issuance of statements.

This situation has encouraged the aggressor to take further measures for the realization of its objective to recruit, train, equip and send mercenaries called the Taliban into the territory of Afghanistan.

We raised our complaints and objections against measures taken by Pakistani military intelligence in the schemes crafted by Nasirullah Babar, the Pakistani Interior Minister, who has been referred to as the commander of the Taliban by Ijaz ul-Haq, member of the Pakistani Parliament and also the son of late General Zia ul-Haq. Through a number of statements and official letters, all published as documents of the General Assembly and of the Security Council, we have brought this to the attention of the President of the Security Council.

In the meeting of the General Assembly on 19 December 1995, we introduced the names of some Pakistani military personnel who were in the custody of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. On 26 September 1996, the pilot of a plane carrying Taliban members from Herat to Peshawar landed in Bagram, the Government air base, and stated how fed up he was with taking orders from Pakistani officers. Among the 31 passengers aboard the plane, including 26 Taliban members, five were Pakistani officers.

Pakistani officials first dismissed the news. Later, they claimed the five to be Pakistani religious scholars.

Just two days ago, on 14 October 1996, Monica Whitlock, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Central Asian correspondent, travelled to the north of Kabul and saw captured Pakistani militia members and officers. Some of their names are as follows: first, Mohammad Jawaid, son of Mohammad Israr, 25 years old, from Multan, Pakistan; second, Khalid, son of Nasrullah, 23 years old, from Karachi, Pakistan; third, Abdul Rahman, son of Shamsuddin, 23 years old, from Kashmir; fourth, Obaidullah Shaheen, son of Allah Dena, 26 years old, from Multan, Pakistan; fifth, Karimullah, son of Mohammad Rafique, 29 years old, from Punjab, Pakistan; sixth, Obaidullah, son of Mohammad Zahir, 22 years old, from Punjab, Pakistan; seventh, Mohammad Omar, Ahmad son of Ahmad, 32 years old, from Karachi, Pakistan; and, eighth, Hassan, son of Abdullah, 30 years old, from Punjab, Pakistan.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan will soon present to the Security Council videotapes of these and many other Pakistani captives in the custody of its authorities.

For those looking for independent witnesses of the active participation of Pakistani fighters among the Taliban, let me quote the news report dated 9 October 1996 by Laurant Hamida of Reuter news agency, who says,

> "warriors were scaling mountainsides at Qalatak in Salang Valley. Speaking good English and saying they were from the Pakistani city of Karachi, they

expelled reporters who had reached there. 'Get out of here or we'll kill you!' yelled one of them."

The role of the Pakistani circles in sponsoring the Taliban mercenaries, a role which was already an open secret, became the subject of a confession when Her Excellency Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, admitted the Pakistani involvement in the Taliban during an interview with the BBC.

The extravagant statements of Nasirullah Babar about the imminent fall of the Panjshir Valley proved to be wishful thinking and clear evidence of official Pakistani intervention in Afghan affairs. He has already shown that he considers Kabul an annex to Pakistan by paying a visit to Kabul on 15 October 1996 — just yesterday — in the middle of consecutive Taliban defeats due to popular uprisings.

Despite all that, officials of the United Nations did not take needed steps against these Pakistani military intelligence circles. Later, during the successive Taliban defeats in areas south and east of Kabul, foreign militias joined the ranks of the Taliban. We captured some militia members red-handed, fighting in the front line. As we mentioned last year, 23 of these militia members were taken by His Highness Prince Turki Al-Faisal Al-Saud, the Saudi Arabian Security Minister, to Pakistan as a gesture of goodwill on the part of Afghanistan. When the issue of foreign intervention was raised again, high authorities of the United Nations repeated the familiar line of "no hard-core evidence". We presented a list of the militias through the General Assembly; once again it was not to the satisfaction of United Nations officials. The Security Council did not condemn the aggressor. At times, some United Nations authorities, having turned a blind eye to the true identity of the Taliban, their legacy and massive human rights violations, labelled the Taliban a "positive element for peace in Afghanistan".

On 5 September 1995, the city of Herat, under the administration of Commander Ismail Khan, once referred to as the best model of a sound administration by Mahmoud Mestiri, was overrun by the Taliban through the direct assistance and involvement of Pakistani militias. Let us refer to document s/1995/767 and the meeting of the Security Council at which we presented good reasons for accusing Pakistani military intelligence circles in that onslaught. For many weeks, following the fall of Herat, all heavy weapons, depots and supplies belonging to Afghanistan were being shipped to Quetta, Pakistan. We asked the Security Council to put an end to the unlawful State-sponsored shipment of Afghan property by Pakistan. Unfortunately, our request to have a United Nations fact-finding mission sent to Herat remained unanswered. News of our plight went unheard, and the Pakistani circles were encouraged. Then, the eastern city of Jalalabad, headquarters of United Nations and other international organizations, centre of intra-Afghan dialogue and an impartial city in the conflict, became the target of Pakistani military intelligence on 11 September 1996; the Taliban turned peace and security there into terror and instability. The United Nations Secretariat looked at the latest development through a tinted lens and once again disregarded foreign intervention. The United Nations considered it an internal development and watched the Taliban move on Kabul.

In our statement before the Security Council on 9 April 1996, we suggested the establishment of a United Nations monitoring post along the southern border point of Speen-Boldak between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pakistani assistance in terms of military personnel and armaments would not have easily reached the Taliban, had the Council paid adequate attention to our suggestion.

On 27 September Taliban, accompanied by Pakistani military officers and militia forces, invaded the capital. Much blood was shed. In the invasion of Kabul, the Taliban were found to have even used chemical or some other type of internationally prohibited weapons, as we brought to the attention of the Security Council in document S/1996/842 of 10 October 1996. And in three weeks since the takeover of Kabul, the Taliban, once termed a "positive element for peace" by United Nations officials, committed acts which earned the condemnation of Amnesty International, women's rights organizations, the international press and countries near and far.

Under Taliban rule, schools were closed to girls. Women, making up half the labour force, including 25,000 widows, were forced to stay home and not attend work. They were further told not to go out shopping. Those who did faced public chain-lashing and physical beatings.

One Afghan woman voiced her complaint to a *New York Times* correspondent by saying,

"In the United States, women are being launched into space, but here in Afghanistan, women are being told that they have no place but in the home."

The mass exodus to the north due to the Taliban welcome involved as many as 250,000 people. Many people were driven out of their homes and their properties confiscated. One eight-year-old girl's finger was cut because she had put nail polish on it. So far, over 280 people are reported to have had either a leg or an arm amputated without consideration of the real precepts of Islamic jurisprudence. The list of brutal punishments goes on and on. Suffice it to recall that Amnesty International has termed the situation in Kabul a "reign of terror".

The latest reports by the international news media indicate that mass arrests, abductions and house-to-house searches after nightfall in Kabul continue. According to Amnesty International, as many as 1,000 civilians in Kabul have been rushed to the front-line minefields to clear the mines by walking over them.

Photographic laboratories in Kabul have been closed. Kabul's citizens have been given a 10-day grace period in which to smash their television sets. Non-compliance with this rule would result in their being subjected to severe punishment. Employees have been ordered to grow beards in six weeks or face dismissal. Video tapes and audio cassettes have been banned. On 10 October 1996, Reuters reported that cinemas had been shut down and many archival, historical and cultural motion pictures and documentaries set on fire in public.

Irreplaceable ancient artifacts, statues and paintings in the Kabul museum and at other historical sites have been either set ablaze or crushed. Sports have been outlawed. Reporters and journalists have been beaten up. On 13 October 1996, Reuters reported that

> "At least two reporters have been beaten just north of Kabul and one who had his camera smashed complained to the Taliban authorities in Kabul. He said he was told he deserved the beating."

While they were being pushed back, the Taliban took hostage scores of young men and elderly people in the areas around Charikar, Qarabagh and Jabal-us-Siraj in the north. Phil Goodwin of the BBC reported that at least five of them were slain on 10 October 1996.

Conscription by the desperate Taliban has even extended to the mosques in Kabul, where the Taliban have set each mosque a quota of 100 young civilian worshippers who will be forced to fight. These "forced-to-fight" teenagers, selected to go to front-line minefields, are so cherished that, as they leave, they are given these words of farewell:

> "Guys, cheer up. You are lucky — we are deploying you for martyrdom".

The flow of assistance to the Taliban through the border points of Torkham and Spin-Boldak is increasing. That is why, in a letter dated 9 October 1996 addressed to the President of the Security Council, in document S/1996/842, we requested that the Office of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan take appropriate measures to supervise those border crossing points.

Last year, through a memorandum, the Islamic State of Afghanistan asked the Security Council to verify different aspects of the intervention aimed at clearing obstacles to peace in Afghanistan by dispatching a fact-finding mission to Afghanistan. No attention was paid to this request. During the speech delivered on 9 April 1996 here in the Security Council, we requested the dispatch of a fact-finding mission aimed at assessing the degree and level of foreign intervention, Taliban violations of human rights and Taliban mass engagement in the cultivation, processing and trafficking of drugs.

Comprehensive reports have been compiled and submitted to the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Saudi Arabia and to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and other bodies about the Taliban drug trade. However, the national drug control strategy for 1996, published by the White House, estimates the worldwide potential net production of opium from Afghanistan between 1992 and 1995 as having doubled from 640 tonnes to 1,250 tonnes.

On 1 October 1996, *The Independent* stated that

> "drug enforcement experts claim that last year Afghanistan flooded the European, US and Eastern markets with over $75 bn ... of heroin."

The most recent information from the United Nations International Drug Control Programme says that, with regard to Afghanistan's opium production in 1996, the Taliban control some 95 per cent of the poppy-growing areas in Afghanistan.

Once again, we are asking and urging the United Nations to send a fact-finding mission to Afghanistan, where the authorities of the Islamic State of Afghanistan

will put at its disposal all the hard evidence relating to different aspects of the continued conflict there. The mission would also look into the issue of chemical weapons used against Afghan Government troops in battles just east of Kabul in Lata-band, Band-i-Ghazi and Pul-i-Charkhi, on 25 and 26 September 1996.

In addressing the Council from this table, I sometimes wonder to myself, as I did when I addressed the General Assembly last week, whether this international body needs fundamental and structural reforms; whether there are faults and shortcomings in our commitments; or whether this institution has become the instrument of power politics for the rich and powerful at the expense of the poor, the oppressed and the weak.

I wish to address another crucial subject raised by some countries: the arms embargo on Afghanistan. We believe that the embargo should be applied against the Government that sends these officers and mercenaries to Afghanistan, thereby blatantly violating the Charter and the recognized principles of international law. No Article of the Charter stipulates that such a measure should be imposed against the Government of a Member State that is itself the victim of foreign intervention and conspiracies and which is defending its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

An idea is being floated that international monitoring teams are to be assigned to report on the import of arms, ammunition and spare parts by the Afghan Government. It is quite clear that such a proposal will only act as an invitation to the armed groups fighting the Government to broaden their armed aggression simply because no practical monitoring is feasible along the porous boundaries adjacent to the territories that they occupy.

As an independent, indivisible, unitary State, Afghanistan enjoys national sovereignty. The Afghan Government has the duty to take necessary measures to defend its territorial integrity and national unity. In accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, Afghanistan has the inherent right to self-defence. Any attempt to prevent Afghanistan from strengthening its national defences as a sovereign State would therefore be against the Charter and particularly against the interests of peace, stability and security in the region.

If the Government of Afghanistan were convinced that not importing arms, ammunition and spare parts would effectively serve to secure peace in Afghanistan, it would voluntarily decide not to exercise that right, which is recognized by international law.

As for the implementation of the arms embargo against the armed groups fighting the Government, these groups are not legally subject to international law. Their accountability and their observance of any resolution in this respect are neither legally nor practically credible. The only effective legal instrument would be the implementation of a curb on the illicit transfer of arms to such groups from abroad.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan agrees with the majority of Member States that the Security Council should not adopt any resolution the implementation of which would be exhaustively burdensome and ultimately unattainable. More than 1,250 kilometres of frontier in the south-east and south of Afghanistan are unguarded. The requirements of implementing an arms embargo practically on such a basis are not workable and the costs would be exorbitant. The parties involved would continue to fight by using the arms at their disposal, even if a quasi-possible arms embargo were announced.

Those recommending the formation of a Security Council committee to consider any information brought to its attention by States concerning the violations of the embargo have to answer to the following question: how about the violation by such military intelligence services as Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI)? These violations have always been considered official secrets of military intelligence services and, by definition, cannot be the object of an investigation by civilian or international authorities. Such a proposal would have one equivalent: the delegation of the country responsible for 99 per cent of interventions in Afghanistan proposing in a draft it has circulated that all States refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

Let me now consider a solution to the present crisis in Afghanistan. All present may be aware that forces of the Islamic State of Afghanistan have been able to recapture most areas recently seized by the Taliban. Currently our forces are at the gates of Kabul, the capital. The most important factors in these successes have been the popular uprisings of the peoples of Parwan and Kapisa Provinces. The men and women proved wrong the propaganda chanted by the sponsors of the Taliban that people welcomed the Taliban wherever they went.

On the other hand, major power shifts have occurred in the positions of forces inside Afghanistan. The Pakistani-backed invasion of Kabul has brought together forces that for the past four years stood against one another. This shows that when facing crises jeopardizing national unity and sovereignty and territorial integrity, despite a past of enmity and bitter experiences, Afghans will unite against foreign conspiracies.

The agreement reached on 10 October 1996 in Mazar-i-Sharif and on 11 October 1996 in Khinjan reminds us about the aspirations of national unity which the Afghans have exhibited throughout history, including against foreign invaders, among them the British Empire and the Red Army. The latest agreement considers two major points: first, the establishment of the supreme council of transitional State, headed by Mr. Burhanuddin Rabbani, which is to be broadened and includes General Abdul Rashid Dostum, Commander Ahmad Shah Massood, Mr. Karim Khalili and General Ismail Khan; and, secondly, the Supreme Military Council for the Defence of Afghanistan, which so far includes the following personalities: Commander Ahmad Shah Massood, General Abdul Rashid Dostum, Pir Sayed Ahmad Gailany, Mr. Karim Khalili and General Ismail Khan, of course under the chairmanship of President Rabbani.

The Supreme Military Council for the Defence of Afghanistan, while having the ability to enter and liberate the capital city of Kabul, is avoiding entering the city in order to prevent civilian casualties and further destruction of the capital, and declares the following.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan would observe an immediate ceasefire under the following conditions: first, the Taliban armed forces must evacuate the capital immediately; secondly, their heavy weapons must be withdrawn to a distance beyond the range of their heavy artillery; thirdly, Kabul must be recognized as a demilitarized zone; fourthly, a police force should be formed under the supervision of the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to ensure the security of Kabul; and, fifthly, the negotiations should start in order to pave the way for the formation of an interim government of national unity in the capital city of Kabul.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan, while presenting this proposal, demands that the Security Council exert the necessary international pressure on the Taliban to accept and agree on this proposal.

If the Taliban continue to insist that they are the only force, one which usurped power, endangered life in Kabul and tortured and oppressed civilians, the armed forces of the Islamic State of Afghanistan will resort to action to end this catastrophic situation in Kabul, should there be no other alternative.

We are moving closer to the end of the twentieth century. The Afghan nation, against the background of what it has experienced, is increasingly bound to ask itself some of the deepest, most fundamental and far-reaching questions ever. What is the meaning of life and of all the sacrifices it has offered and the grievances it has endured? Where will it be going? How can the community of nations manage this wonderfully rich, life-teeming planet in peace, justice and happiness for all, if Afghans are part of all this?

May all present be inspired by the image of a soldier painted as a symbol on the mural in the Security Council Chamber just in front of us: a soldier depositing his arms, taking off his helmet and wanting to walk straight into the Security Council. Yes, the artist, like Mahatma Gandhi, Franklin Roosevelt, Simón Bolívar and Olof Palme had the right view and knew the right path: the road to peace goes through security. The Afghan nation thirsts to follow the path to peace. We come to this Council and pledge our resoluteness to forget what happened in the past and to work together for building our shattered common house, if the Council pledges to give voice to the anxiety of our suffering people and halt the outside interference and intervention.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Pakistan, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Kamal (Pakistan) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council chamber.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Kazakstan. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Ms. Arystanbekova (Kazakstan) (*interpretation from Russian*): On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Kazakstan, I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. I am confident that under your wise guidance the Council will arrive at mutually acceptable decisions.

I also wish to take this opportunity to express appreciation to your predecessor, the Ambassador of Guinea-Bissau, for his able guidance of the Council last month.

The Government of my country is seriously concerned over developments in Afghanistan. Of particular concern to us are the recent events in that country that have led to an intensification of military confrontation, ethnic division and a tendency to separatism, all of which are fraught with the dangers of a disintegration of Afghanistan and a deterioration in the relations among States in the region, making them more difficult.

In this connection, I should like to express appreciation to the Security Council for its constant focus on the situation in the country, as can be seen, *inter alia*, from the statement made by the President of the Security Council on 28 September 1996, which is of great significance in respect of a halt to all military hostilities and the opening of political dialogue designed to achieve national conciliation.

The worsening of the situation in Afghanistan and its possible implications for the destabilization of the situation in the Central Asian region led to the convening on 4 October 1996 of a meeting at Almaty, which was attended by the leaders of Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Invited by the President of Kazakstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbaev, and participating in the meeting were the Presidents of Uzbekistan, Mr. Islam Karimov; of Kyrgyzstan, Mr. Askar Akayev; of Tajikistan, Mr. Emomali Rakhmonov; and the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, Mr. Victor Chernomyrdin.

A thorough discussion was held, at the end of which a joint declaration was made by the leaders of Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan concerning developments in Afghanistan, the text of which has been issued as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 21 and 39 and as a document of the Security Council.

The declaration states, in part, that the participants at the Almaty meeting expressed:

> "serious concern at the expansion and intensification of the armed confrontation in Afghanistan, which has claimed countless victims among the civilian population and caused a new wave of refugees and displaced persons. The executions and the brutal murder of former President Najibullah have increased tension and brought Afghanistan to the brink of a national disaster and the collapse of the Afghan State." *(S/1996/838, annex, p. 3)*

The declaration continues:

> "The flames of war are coming nearer to the borders of countries members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), posing a direct threat to the national interests and security of these States and the Commonwealth as a whole, and destabilizing the situation in the region and the world." *(ibid.)*

The participants in the meeting went on to declare that any actions undermining stability on the borders between Afghanistan and the CIS States were inadmissible. Such actions, regardless of their perpetrators, were deemed a threat to the common interests of CIS States and, on the basis of the Treaty on Collective Security signed at Tashkent on 15 May 1992, would be met with an appropriate response.

The leaders of the States of Central Asia and Russia appealed to the Afghan parties to the conflict, first of all the Taliban, to call an immediate halt to hostilities and to begin to seek ways of achieving national accord. We emphasized that an obligatory condition must be the non-interference by foreign elements in the internal affairs of sovereign Afghanistan and the preservation of the country's territorial integrity.

The participants at the Almaty meeting proposed that a special meeting of the United Nations Security Council be convened without delay, with the participation of interested countries, with a view to adopting urgent measures to halt the fighting and to achieve a comprehensive political settlement of the Afghan conflict, and also to arrange for the provision by the international

community of humanitarian assistance to the civilian population and refugees.

We regard today's meeting of the Council on the situation in Afghanistan as a response by the Council's membership to the appeal contained in the joint declaration issued by the leaders of Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

On behalf of the Government of Kazakstan, I would like to express appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and to Under-Secretary-General Goulding for the efforts they have made to achieve peace and national accord in Afghanistan. We share the Secretary-General's concern over the situation of women and girls, as expressed in his statement on 7 October this year. We express our support for the important work being done by the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan, which is headed by the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Afghanistan, Mr. Norbert Holl.

At the same time, we believe that the United Nations and the Security Council must intensify their activities to arrive at the measures necessary to bring a halt to the conflict. The United Nations must take specific action to protect the rights and freedoms of the Afghan population, primarily its women. Kazakstan supports the steps taken towards a settlement of the dispute between the Afghan parties exclusively by peaceful means, and we support the preservation of Afghanistan as a single friendly country. We believe that the United Nations must play a fundamental role in that process, with cooperation from interested States, and we welcome the intensification of the efforts of the world community to provide humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan.

Kazakstan, along with other Members of the United Nations, is prepared to do its utmost to promote a speedy, peaceful settlement of the Afghan conflict. As we see it, the stability of that State, as its history has taught us, can be ensured only through respect for the interests of the various ethnic and religious groups in the Afghan population. I should like to express the hope that today's debate in the Security Council on the situation in Afghanistan will yield positive results in respect of a settlement to the conflict and help put an end to the war in that country, which has gone on for so many years.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I thank the representative of Kazakstan for the kind words she addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Uzbekistan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Vohidov (Uzbekistan) (*interpretation from Russian*): Sir, since this is the first time I have spoken in the Security Council under your presidency, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of your important post and to express confidence that under your experienced leadership the Council will successfully and effectively resolve the complex problems on its agenda this month.

I should also like to take this opportunity to pay a tribute to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau, Ambassador Cabral, for his skilled guidance of the Council's work last month.

I am grateful for this opportunity to participate in today's discussion of the situation in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, we note that the question of Afghanistan is appearing with increasing frequency on the Council's agenda owing to the continuing exacerbation of the situation in that country. The conflict in Afghanistan is intensifying, and the country's population is continuing to suffer.

We would like to hope that today's meeting of the Security Council will make a positive contribution to the establishment of an atmosphere in which the entire international community in involved in promoting a solution to the problem of Afghanistan, searching for a peaceful solution to the conflict and ensuring the basic humanitarian needs of the Afghan population.

It is logical that the Government of Uzbekistan should be carefully following the progress of the situation in neighbouring Afghanistan and the expansion of the scale and intensity of the conflict there. The peoples of our countries have an age-old history of good-neighbourly relations, and the events in Afghanistan cannot fail to be a source of alarm for us. In assessing the situation, we must note that the continuing civil war in Afghanistan seriously threatens to destabilize the Central Asian region. As was noted in the joint declaration of the leaders of Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan of 4 October 1996, this course of events poses a threat to the national interests and security of those States. The conflict in Afghanistan must not be allowed to threaten the stability and national security of neighbouring countries. We are alarmed by the fact that in the midst of an ongoing war,

the territory of Afghanistan remains a place for the massive, uncontrolled production of drugs and a base for their illegal export. The transit roads for this trade pass through States neighbouring Afghanistan.

The Government of Uzbekistan holds to a position of principle: that the conflict in Afghanistan can be resolved only by the Afghan parties themselves. The non-involvement of other States in the inter-Afghan confrontation, non-interference from outside in the internal affairs of sovereign Afghanistan, and the cessation of hostilities by the Afghan parties to the conflict are prerequisites for peaceful dialogue to seek ways to achieve national accord. Recently, the United Nations, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, other authoritative international organizations and the international community at large have begun to pay significantly more attention to the progress of the situation in Afghanistan.

In this context, I should like to take this opportunity to express the Government of Uzbekistan's satisfaction with and support for the provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/88 of 19 December 1995, the letter dated 22 August 1996 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General (S/1996/683), and the statement of the President of the Security Council of 28 September 1996 (S/PRST/1996/40). In the view of Uzbekistan, a leading role must be played by the United Nations in promoting a settlement to the Afghan conflict. We have a very high opinion of the efforts undertaken by the United Nations Special Mission for Afghanistan, headed by Mr. Holl. We continue to support and to consider most sensible the idea of convening an international conference on Afghanistan under United Nations auspices.

We believe that an important element in establishing conditions for the cessation of hostilities and the achievement of peace in Afghanistan is the imposition of an embargo on the delivery of all forms of weapons to Afghanistan. On numerous occasions, the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan has raised the need for imposing such an embargo. This proposal was made in a letter dated 23 July 1996 from the President of Uzbekistan, Mr. Islam Karimov, addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1996/607, annex). We believe that the implementation of such measures should be aimed not against any of the Afghan parties but first and foremost against outside suppliers of weapons. We believe that all possible means should be used to cut off the delivery of the weapons that are being used to fuel the Afghan conflict.

Allow me to express the hope that consistent implementation of the international community's efforts to promote inter-Afghan dialogue will lead to the restoration of peace and national accord in Afghanistan. We would like to hope that today's Security Council discussion of the Afghan problem will make a substantive contribution to focusing the efforts of the international community on the search for practical measures for the settlement of the situation in Afghanistan and for strengthening political stability throughout the Central Asian region.

The President *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I thank the representative of Uzbekistan for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Kyrgyzstan. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Mrs. Eshmambetova (Kyrgyzstan) *(interpretation from Russian)*: Allow me to thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting of the Security Council on the situation in Afghanistan and for having invited all the interested countries to participate. I thank you also for kindly having given my country the opportunity to be among the first to speak at this meeting. Allow me also to express the hope that the discussion, will lead to the establishment of a mechanism for joint action to achieve national accord in Afghanistan. In this meeting, we see a revival of the idea of the effectiveness of the United Nations and of transparency in the work of the Security Council.

The Kyrgyz Republic does not directly border on Afghanistan; however, as an integral part of the Central Asian region, it cannot indifferently and impassively observe the situation in that country, which has become drastically exacerbated since last September. The brutal retaliation against former President Najibullah, the humiliating situation of women, the threat to the security of international personnel, and military operations in the Tajik-Afghan border area: all of this cannot fail to be of concern to the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic believes it necessary to make use of all means at the disposal of the United Nations to contain the military and political conflict and to prevent its growth, which could pose a threat to regional security.

The view of the Kyrgyz Republic with respect to a practical solution to the crisis, and to preventing the

escalation of hostilities and their possible expansion into a protracted war in Afghanistan, is based on the well-known General Assembly resolution 50/88 of 19 December 1995; the statement of the President of the Security Council of 28 September 1996 and his remarks of 3 October 1996; the 7 October 1996 statement of the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali; and the joint Almaty declaration of the leaders of Central Asian States and of the Russian Federation.

The position of the Kyrgyz Republic on this issue is as follows. First, there should be an immediate cessation of hostilities and the holding on neutral territory of negotiations between the parties to the conflict. Secondly, third parties must not interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan or in the process of inter-Afghan relations. Thirdly, the political process to establish a broad-based interim government should be promoted. Fourthly, human rights, especially the rights of women, must be respected. And fifthly, Afghanistan should remain a single and indivisible State within its present borders.

I wish to take this opportunity to assure the Council that the Kyrgyz Republic will spare no effort or means available to promote, on the basis of existing agreements with the countries of Central Asia and the Russian Federation, the restoration of long-awaited peace on the long-suffering land of Afghanistan and to help it in its economic recovery. We also hope that, as a result of the discussion on the situation in Afghanistan, the Security Council will arrive at a decision.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of Tajikistan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan) (*interpretation from Russian*): First of all, allow me to join with others in congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the lofty post of President of the Security Council for October. I sincerely wish you every success in this extremely complex task. I would also like to thank the delegation of Guinea-Bissau for having successfully guided the work of the Security Council in September.

The new wave of armed conflict that engulfed neighbouring Afghanistan in late September this year has deeply worried and concerned the Republic of Tajikistan.

The larger scale and intensified armed confrontation; the execution and shooting of people without trial or investigation; raids on United Nations premises in Kabul; the Taliban's brutal violence against the former President of Afghanistan, Mr. Najibullah, and others; scandalous violations of human rights, primarily those of women and girls; vandalism; and the flood of refugees fleeing the capital of the Islamic State of Afghanistan have all led to understandable indignation and serious concern in Tajik society.

The aggression of the Taliban and its resolve to move the fighting to the northern areas of Afghanistan — towards the southern borders of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) — would inevitably pose a real threat to peace and stability throughout the Central and South Asian region. As pointed out in the joint declaration of 4 October 1996 on events in Afghanistan by the leaders of Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the flames of war pose

> "a direct threat to the national interests and security of these States and the Commonwealth as a whole, and destabili[z]e the situation in the region and the world." (S/1996/838, annex)

The present crisis in Afghanistan is extremely serious. Moreover, it demonstrates the futility of attempts to achieve national agreement and stability in the country by military force alone. History has convincingly shown us the truth of this more than once.

Given the gravity of the situation, Tajikistan attaches particular importance to today's debate on this issue in this formal meeting of the Security Council. Today's meeting must mark an important step forward in our search for ways to ensure a peaceful settlement of the problems in Afghanistan and we are very grateful to you, Mr. President, for convening it.

We believe that the international community must prohibit external intervention in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and help the Afghan people find an acceptable formula for agreement. The Government of Tajikistan therefore urges all Afghan leaders to join in the political dialogue designed to lead to national reconciliation and to preserve the independence, territorial integrity and unity of Afghan society. Particularly important in this respect is cooperation between the Afghan sides and the United Nations Special Mission in Afghanistan. We attach key importance to the Mission's work in terms of finding an early peaceful settlement.

Tajikistan, which is linked to the peoples of Afghanistan by age-old historical, moral and spiritual ties, does not conceal its vested interest in the destruction of the vicious circle of confrontation and its replacement by an all-Afghan political dialogue.

Our vested interest is quite understandable. It is well-known that the Tajik-Afghan border is still an area of particular tension. We are convinced that if we find a comprehensive political settlement to the Afghan problem, the situation on the southern borders of the CIS, and particularly the Tajik stretch of its outer frontier, will stabilize significantly.

We believe that all of this will then enable us firmly to block bandit raids and the transit and sale of drugs across Afghanistan's State borders and put an end to illegal arms trafficking, which criminal elements and groups from various regions in Afghanistan continue to pursue.

The situation that has developed in Afghanistan is clearly a humanitarian tragedy of global dimensions. We hope that Member States and international organizations will support the United Nations efforts to provide emergency humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people.

We trust that the debate on the situation in Afghanistan will help us find a way out of the situation that has emerged and that the Security Council will give another clear signal, which must be heeded by all parties to the conflict, that work on a political settlement must begin.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I thank the representative of Tajikistan for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian Federation, together with Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, its partners in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), was the initiator in convening today's special meeting to consider the situation prevailing in Afghanistan.

The proposal for discussion of this question by the Security Council was dictated by our shared deep concern regarding the events, which have taken a highly dangerous turn, not only for the long-suffering Afghan population but also for the whole vast Central Asian region.

Russia, like the other countries that took part in the Almaty meeting, considers the approach of the flames of war in neighbouring Afghanistan towards the borders of the Commonwealth to be a direct threat to its national interests and security and a threat to stability in the region.

Having reached these conclusions, the participants in the meeting called upon the Taliban movement, as well as all the other Afghan parties, immediately to cease hostilities and to begin to seek ways of achieving national accord; the parties also emphasized the inadmissibility of external interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

Recent events have demonstrated that the seizure of Kabul by the Taliban movement has by no means brought the prospects for stabilization in Afghanistan any closer. The attempt by the Taliban to monopolize state power is encountering growing resistance. Through brutal retaliation against former President Najibullah, violations of human rights, in particular those of women, the propagation of inhumane dogmas and demonstrations of chauvinism, the Taliban have set themselves against a significant part of the Afghan population, which has manifestly sensed a threat to their lives, security, dignity and freedom.

In reaction to this threat there was an exodus of the population from Kabul — a new wave of refugees and displaced persons. This is a new and serious exacerbation of the internal conflict, which could lead to the collapse of Afghanistan and have highly negative consequences reflecting on the stability of the region.

Considering these complex conditions, it is particularly important to put an immediate halt to armed confrontation and resume a broad inter-Afghan dialogue, excluding the claims of any of the parties to the role of dominant force.

In our view, in this multinational and multireligious State, the only possible option for a solution to the crisis is to achieve an accord based on recognition of the legitimate interests and rights of all groups of the population. The United Nations must focus its efforts on the achievement of precisely these objectives.

During the past one and a half to two years, while the seeds of the present crisis were growing, Russia drew attention on numerous occasions to the fact that the Security Council must be more active in dealing with the problem of Afghanistan and in not consigning these problems to oblivion. Today's events demonstrate the extent to which those who believed that it was

unnecessary to involve the Security Council in a serious consideration of the situation in Afghanistan were wrong.

We attach extremely great importance to the role of the United Nations as a universally recognized impartial mediator and peacemaker in Afghanistan. Such a United Nations role was confirmed in the Security Council presidential statement of 28 September 1996, adopted on Russia's proposal, which also contains an appeal to all States to undertake all steps necessary to promote peace in Afghanistan and to work together with the United Nations in achieving this goal.

During these last few days, the United Nations Special Mission in Afghanistan, and its leader, Mr. Holl, have been actively working in Afghanistan in trying to persuade all of the Afghan parties to cease hostilities and to sit down at the negotiating table. We fully support these efforts. Unfortunately, the Taliban movement so far is refusing genuine inter-Afghan talks.

Russia, acting from a position of non-interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, and from a position of respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity, reaffirms its readiness to participate together with other States in international efforts to promote a settlement, under the aegis of the United Nations, to the internal conflict continuing in Afghanistan.

We take particular note of the fact that the major brunt of the consequences of the many years of conflict in Afghanistan is being borne by the long-suffering people of that country. Therefore, we welcome the activity of international organizations in implementing programmes in Afghanistan to provide humanitarian assistance to the peaceful population and to refugees.

The importance of humanitarian efforts in Afghanistan has been stressed by the Secretary-General on numerous occasions. Russia is participating in rendering emergency humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people. Recently a significant quantity of flour and clothing were sent for distribution among the refugees in the northern provinces of Afghanistan through the representatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This humanitarian action is being carried out in accordance with the decisions taken at the meeting of the leaders of Russia and the Central Asian countries members of the CIS in Almaty. We are counting on the continuation of cooperation with UNCHR on these questions.

The Russian delegation believes that today's discussion in the Security Council must give a new and strong impetus to efforts to settle the Afghan conflict. Based on its results, the Security Council could adopt a politically authoritative resolution with an appeal to all of the Afghan parties immediately to halt all hostile armed action, to begin political dialogue in order to seek ways to achieve national reconciliation and establish lasting peace in Afghanistan, and to ensure compliance with human rights and norms of international humanitarian law.

We are convinced that the primary responsibility for the search for a way out of the existing impasse lies with the Afghan parties. However, the international community can also render effective assistance. It is important for the Security Council to emphasize the inadmissibility of external interference in Afghan affairs, including the need for any delivery of weapons to be stopped.

The international community must contribute to the search for a political settlement to the conflict in Afghanistan on the basis of the establishment of a representative interim government reflecting the interests of all Afghans. We hope that all those involved in the conflict in Afghanistan will take note of this signal and that it will be able to have a real impact on speedy cessation of the conflict.

Mr. Henze (Germany): Since the Security Council met on 9 April this year to have a discussion on Afghanistan, the situation in this war-torn country has further deteriorated. Instead of committing themselves to all-inclusive political negotiations, the Afghan parties have continued to prefer war to peace, to the detriment of the country and the people of Afghanistan.

Since Kabul was taken over by the Taliban on 27 September, this Council has heard disturbing reports about the human rights situation in the Afghan capital, especially regarding the treatment of women and girls. My Government is very concerned by these reports and fully supports the statement made by the Secretary-General on 7 October, in which he warned of possible repercussions on United Nations programmes should women be continuously denied access to education and employment.

Less than three weeks after control over Kabul changed hands, Afghanistan faces the danger of another battle for its capital. This time it could be started by an

attack from the north. Yet again, the civilian population would have to pay the price. It is appalling that repeated calls by the international community, including the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council, for a cessation of hostilities and serious political negotiations have so far been disregarded by the Afghan parties.

More than ever, the recent events in Afghanistan make it clear that there is no military solution to this conflict. Control over Afghanistan cannot be won in war. Indeed, as stated in the joint declaration by Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, it is time to end the war in Afghanistan, which has been dragging on for years — and, I would add, for too many years. But still the war continues and the country suffers.

My country enjoys a long history of friendly relations with all segments of Afghan society. We therefore strongly deplore the ongoing civil war and its political, economic and humanitarian consequences. With many others, we have tried and will continue to try to help the civilian population through humanitarian aid. However, we feel that the ever more urgent priority must be to help Afghanistan to leave of the vicious circle created by nearly 17 years of war and enter a meaningful peace process.

The international community has developed a clear understanding about the basic framework of an Afghan peace process. It is ready to help the people of Afghanistan to achieve peace and agrees that there is a leading role to be played by the United Nations in this respect.

General Assembly resolution 50/88 B on the situation in Afghanistan, adopted by consensus on 19 December 1995, calls for national reconciliation through the transfer of power to a transitory "mechanism". The transitory "mechanism" is usually referred to as the

> "fully representative and broad-based authoritative council" (*resolution 50/88 B, para. 4*).

It would be responsible for negotiating and overseeing an immediate and durable ceasefire, the creation and initial supervision of a national security force and the formation of an acceptable transitional government. The transitional government would be in office until the conditions for free and fair elections were established.

General Assembly resolution 50/88 B on the situation in Afghanistan also contains a firm commitment from the international community to national reconciliation in Afghanistan and to its sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. It affirms the readiness of the United Nations to assist the people of Afghanistan in their efforts to achieve these aims.

The General Assembly resolution has been complemented by several Security Council decisions since it was adopted, the latest being the presidential statement of 28 September 1996. In that statement the Council called for — among other things — the immediate cessation of all armed hostilities. The leading role of the United Nations in international efforts towards a peaceful solution of the Afghan conflict was confirmed in the letter from the President of the Security Council dated 22 August 1996 addressed to the Secretary General.

We see that the international groundwork for a viable intra-Afghan peace process has been laid. At least, the entrance to the road towards peace has been completed and clearly marked by the General Assembly and the Security Council. Still, until now, the Afghan parties have failed to embark on that road. There can be no doubt that the main responsibility for accepting or declining the offer of a United Nations-sponsored or facilitated peace process lies with the Afghan parties. At the same time, the United Nations should continue to do everything possible to convince the parties to commit themselves earnestly to such a process, as it represents the best chance for peace, stability and, in the long run, prosperity returning to this United Nations Member State of Afghanistan.

The principal instrument of the United Nations peace efforts in Afghanistan is the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan, which my Government has fully supported from its establishment. We welcome the fact that the Mission was strengthened through the creation of four additional posts for political affairs officers. We feel honored by the appointment of a German former colleague, Mr. Norbert Holl, as its new Head. We would like to express our appreciation to all members of the Special Mission for their tireless efforts to mediate between the parties. We also commend the decision of the Secretary-General to send Under-Secretary-General Marrack Goulding to Afghanistan in September this year. We feel that the intense discussions Under-Secretary-General Goulding has had with all the parties have been extremely helpful.

Having considered possibilities of how to focus international efforts for Afghanistan under United Nations auspices, we think that the efforts of the United Nations

in Afghanistan could be further strengthened through the United Nations-coordinated participation of regional organizations, States of the region and other important States. We hope that such an international element will yield incentives to the Afghan parties to enter into a meaningful political process.

Even after the start of the process, continued support for the United Nations efforts by concerned States could add stability to the intra-Afghan talks. This approach would be in line with the Security Council presidential statement of 28 September. That statement called upon all States to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and, at the same time, to take all steps necessary to promote peace in Afghanistan and to work together with the United Nations to this end.

One important step for mustering increased international support for the United Nations peace efforts would certainly be the expansion of contacts between the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan and regional and other Governments. We would encourage the Head of the Special Mission to establish such international contacts to the extent possible. A further step might be the convening by the United Nations of an international meeting or conference on Afghanistan. We would welcome the possibility of the Secretary-General's further exploring this idea to see whether its time has come.

Every new day of war in Afghanistan brings continued hardship to the civilian population and negatively affects regional security. Every new intra-Afghan alliance that is not all-inclusive and is designed for confrontation rather than cooperation threatens to deepen the divisions inside Afghan society and could eventually endanger the country's territorial integrity. And every day that Afghanistan remains without a broad-based interim Government and an effective civil administration pushes the country further backwards on the scale of economic and human development. It also preserves the lawlessness that has allowed parts of Afghanistan to become notorious for producing and exporting drugs.

All this shows that the time for finding a solution to the Afghan conflict is not unlimited. What is needed is full cooperation between the United Nations, regional and other concerned States and all Afghan parties. Only if all these unite behind a United Nations-led, impartial approach will there be a chance to see the war in Afghanistan finally come to an end.

Sir John Weston (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes this opportunity to address the situation in Afghanistan. There are continuing military and political developments taking place almost hourly. The kaleidoscope of alliances has shifted markedly in the past few weeks. While events are moving so fast, it would be a mistake to rush to judgment.

In this maelstrom of political and military activity, we should not lose sight of some fundamental objectives. The aims of the international community must be an agreement to an immediate ceasefire, negotiations between all the parties, and the establishment of a peace process leading to the formation of a broad-based representative government which respects human rights. The United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan has a critical role in achieving these aims.

While I listened with great interest to the statement made by the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan and noted in particular his call for the dispatch of a United Nations fact-finding mission, I was a little surprised — if he will allow me to say so — to find no word of recognition in his speech that there is, in fact, already a United Nations Special Mission there on the ground.

The United Kingdom strongly supports the efforts of Mr. Norbert Holl and his team. We call on all parties to cooperate with them. In the present fluid circumstances, the Special Mission has an opportunity now to make a real impact. The strongest possible political support must be given to those efforts. The international community stands ready to help, but the responsibility to achieve a settlement lies with the parties themselves.

For too long, Afghanistan has been subjected to interference from outside, which has only served to prolong the conflict. We call, like others, for an end to such interference, and an end to the continuing supply of arms and ammunition to the factions. We remain concerned about the use of the territory of Afghanistan for the production of drugs and for the training of terrorists. The continuation of such activities will only hinder the acceptance of Afghanistan back into the community of nations.

The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan continues to cause grave concern. We too call on all factions to cooperate in the delivery of humanitarian aid to all people of Afghanistan, irrespective of ethnic group, race or gender. The United Kingdom will continue to support the

United Nations coordinating role in assistance programmes in that country. And again, when the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan said that the only United Nations actions in Afghanistan were resolutions and statements, I am sure he did not mean to imply that he did not recognize the very considerable role being played by the United Nations in coordinating humanitarian assistance. We, the United Kingdom, remain one of the major aid donors to Afghanistan, contributing around $10 million annually through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other United Nations agencies, as well as through the International Committee of the Red Cross and major British non-governmental organizations. This collective effort by the international community deserves to be recognized on an occasion like this.

We have made clear our strong objections to violations of fundamental human rights. In particular, we are gravely concerned about measures implemented to restrict girls' rights to education and women's rights to employment. We have major concerns in this regard about the prospects for many households where women in that country are the only providers. They face destitution as a result of these measures. We call on all the factions to respect international human rights norms and to act in accordance with those international instruments which Afghanistan has signed and ratified, for example the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The Security Council and the international community as a whole must keep a close watch on the rapidly changing situation in Afghanistan. Coordination of all our efforts, through support for the activities of Mr. Holl and the United Nations Special Mission, must remain our priority. We look forward to hearing the considered views of the Special Mission on the best way for the Security Council to support its efforts, but there is a risk that precipitate action by the Security Council might even jeopardize those.

We hope that recent events have impressed on all the parties that a military solution is not possible and that there is no alternative to negotiation and compromise. If there is an opportunity, however small, in the coming days or weeks to begin that process of negotiation, the parties must seize that opportunity. The United Kingdom will continue to work towards the goal we all share: the peaceful settlement of the conflict, and an end to the suffering of all Afghan people.

Mr. Wisnumurti (Indonesia): The rapidly deteriorating political and military situation in Afghanistan is a source of deep concern to Indonesia. The threat of a full-scale civil war once again looms on the horizon. We are dismayed by the danger of the fragmentation of the country without any prospects for peace and stability. Following the takeover of Kabul, reports attest to intensified hostilities and a large number of casualties. What is particularly disturbing is the determination of the parties to pursue military confrontation rather than a negotiated settlement. The people of Afghanistan have suffered for over two decades of war, splitting the country into different factions and leading to internecine strife and turmoil. This protracted conflict has already taken an unconscionable toll in human lives and material devastation. There is no doubt that, in the face of the current crisis, the people of Afghanistan really only aspire to security, order and a return to normal life.

Further compounding the situation are the drastically worsening humanitarian conditions, with a new exodus of refugees, especially from the capital, which for the most part has been destroyed. The war has obliterated any prospects in the near future for reestablishing and reconstructing the agricultural, industrial and economic base of the country. Agriculture is in ruins. Neither agriculture nor industry has functioned normally in years. The fields are infested with landmines, further inhibiting agricultural growth and causing a high level of casualties among the communities. The formal economy and infrastructure of the country have disappeared, and the economic fabric of society has decomposed. This ongoing conflict is also an obstacle to economic development and to attempts to build a transnational infrastructure in the region.

Continued violence in Afghanistan will only contribute to increasing the risk of regional instability. Already, because of the large number of Afghan refugees, the negative impact of the war is being felt by neighbouring countries. An unstable Afghanistan risks sowing the seeds of violence throughout the region. We would like therefore to urge all neighbouring countries to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

The international community has borne witness to the destruction of a country; hence, we must urge the parties to cease fighting and to resolve their differences through peaceful means. It is of utmost urgency that the parties involved initiate broad-based inter-Afghan talks in

order to reestablish a Government of national unity and to achieve a lasting political settlement to this conflict. It is our hope that such initiatives will be taken to establish contacts and open a conduit for talks. It is self-evident that the history of Afghanistan resounds with proof that no faction can impose its will on others through force of arms. War-weary Afghanistan is in dire need of reconciliation between its leaders and the interests of the people, whose sole aspiration is the restoration of normalcy in their country. A certain degree of mutual trust and confidence-building measures need to be established in order to achieve national reconciliation.

The Security Council has long been involved in concerted endeavours towards a negotiated settlement of the conflict in Afghanistan. At this critical juncture, the role of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan has become indispensable in actively contributing to the establishment of a ceasefire and to a political settlement. We therefore urge the warring parties to accept United Nations mediation efforts. It would also be an opportune time again to consider convening an international conference on the situation in Afghanistan, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all factions in Afghanistan as well as of neighbouring countries and other interested States. In this context, it is our fervent hope, that the Special Representative, Mr. Norbert Holl, will be allowed to fulfil the mandate entrusted to him by all parties. It is also incumbent upon the parties to observe the fundamental tenet of respect for the sanctity of United Nations premises and personnel without any exceptions. Also, given the risks involved in extending assistance, the parties should fully cooperate with the United Nations, its associated bodies and all humanitarian organizations in their endeavours to alleviate the suffering of the people of Afghanistan. In the same vein, we call upon the parties to respect the human rights of all civilians.

Afghanistan is once again at a historic crossroads. If the parties are not able to reach a negotiated political settlement, the survival of the country will certainly be threatened. In this regard, Indonesia wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan. My delegation would like to underline the importance that the international community attaches to the restoration of peace in Afghanistan. But, in the end, peace will be determined by the political will of Afghanistan's leaders to reach an agreement and thereby save their countrymen from further years of bloodshed.

Mr. Dejammet (France): The French delegation appreciates the initiative of the Russian Federation and the other delegations that called for a public Security Council debate on the situation in Afghanistan. The recent developments in the situation in that country justify the Security Council holding such a debate. On several occasions, in particular in the presidential statements of 15 February and 28 September 1996, the Security Council has set out the principles for achieving a peaceful settlement of the conflict. The Council demanded that the Afghan parties put an end to the hostilities, put aside their differences and cooperate with the United Nations Special Mission. The Council called upon all States to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and requested those in a position to do so to take all steps to promote peace and stability in that country. The Council reaffirmed its commitment to the full sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan.

The situation in Afghanistan today shows that the Council's appeals have not been heard. Today, as in the past, war has descended upon this country, a war of attrition in which offensives alternate with counter-offensives. This war endangers peace and stability in the entire region, hence the initiative taken by the countries of the region. France does not intend to take the side of any of the forces in this conflict. It calls for a ceasefire and for dialogue with a view to national reconciliation. It hopes to see, as many others have already stated here, the formation of a Government of national unity. The alternation of alliances and counter-alliances in Afghanistan, which was described a few minutes ago as a "kaleidoscope" *(supra, p. 15)*, confirms that this conflict cannot be resolved through weapons but only through a political settlement based on an equitable understanding that respects the interests of all. This requires that all interference cease.

France's relationship with Afghanistan is a long-standing one. It is a deep and rich relationship, particularly in the cultural area. This is where my country ardently hopes to contribute to achieving the goal of reconciliation and to a political solution to this conflict. We respect the energy and courage of the Afghan people. My country supports the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his efforts to help bring about a ceasefire and the commencement of negotiations between the Afghan parties, and I echo the praise of the efforts already carried out by the United Nations in this field.

The continuation of the conflict in Afghanistan, as we are well aware, is creating fertile soil for terrorist activities. This is yet another reason for the international community to intensify its efforts towards a settlement of this issue.

France expresses its concern regarding respect for human rights in Afghanistan, particularly, as others have stated here this morning, regarding the treatment of women both in education and in professional activities.

However, it is the Afghan population that remains the primary victim of the fighting. France is among the major suppliers of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and intends to continue its assistance in this field. For this purpose we are in constant contact with the French non-governmental organizations which have remained on site, as they have, with great courage, during the worst hours of the history of Afghanistan. The French delegation hopes that the activities of these non-governmental organizations will continue unhindered, as these organizations have carried out in the past and continue to carry out an indispensable humanitarian role in Afghanistan.

Mr. Legwaila (Botswana): The human tragedy which befell the people of Afghanistan in the late 1970s continues unabated to this day. The conflict in that war-ravaged country is no closer to resolution today than it was 17 years ago. Yes, the nature of the war has changed over the years, but the killings, the untold suffering and the general mayhem remain the same. The parties to the Afghan conflict are as bent on seeking a military solution to the civil war as they were during foreign occupation.

Unfortunately, the biggest losers in this fratricidal conflict are the ordinary people of Afghanistan, millions of whom have been forced to live like refugees in their own country. Tens of thousands more have had to flee the country to seek refuge in neighbouring countries. As displaced persons or refugees, they lead lives which are no more than mere existence. They have witnessed daily their country turned into ruins and their schools, hospitals, government offices and other national property reduced to rubble. The dream of a future in a peaceful country has been turned into an endless nightmare by several years of war.

For Afghans, war and its ever-shifting battle lines bring mixed fortunes as one circle of misery succeeds another. The recent takeover of Kabul by one of the factions may have been a boon for some, but it was certainly a severe blow to several others, who found their civil liberties curtailed. There has also been a wave of arbitrary executions and detentions.

We are also deeply concerned about the humanitarian aspects of the conflict in Afghanistan. The fighting has affected personnel of humanitarian organizations, many of whom have been forced to leave the country. In some cases, food convoys have been prevented from reaching the victims of the conflict, and in other cases humanitarian assistance is being pillaged. If this situation continues unchecked, it could have a disastrous impact on the humanitarian situation of the people of Afghanistan, especially in the coming winter months.

Resolution of the crisis in Afghanistan will, in the final analysis, depend on the willingness of the parties to the conflict to reach a peacefully negotiated political settlement. The international community can only encourage them in that direction, but it cannot impose its will on them. They have in fact not heeded the advice of the Security Council in previous years. This they have done to the great peril of their country and their people. The United Nations has shown its readiness to help the people of Afghanistan, but the parties should realize that the United Nations can only help them if they are ready to help themselves.

In its presidential statement of 28 September 1996 (S/PRST/1996/40), the Security Council reaffirmed its commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan.

However, the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan can be assured only by the Afghan parties themselves. They should renounce violence and engage in genuine and meaningful negotiations. They have so far failed to attain their objectives, whatever they may be, through war, and it is unlikely they will do so in future. It is time they committed themselves to national reconciliation. This can be achieved through an all-encompassing negotiation process in which none of the parties are left out.

The human tragedy in Afghanistan will not be brought to an end unless and until the neighbours of Afghanistan can agree on the modalities for helping that war-torn country to achieve peace. It is a well-known fact that foreign interference has hampered the search for a political settlement in Afghanistan. It is particularly regrettable that the flow of arms and ammunition across

its borders continues with impunity. The countries of Central Asia should be united in the search for peace, and not fuel the fires of war in Afghanistan. They should be supporting, not undermining, the valuable efforts of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan to find a lasting settlement.

There is no doubt that the situation in Afghanistan constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security. We therefore share the concerns of Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, which called for this debate. The debate could not have been more timely. The war in Afghanistan could easily spread to the neighbouring countries and engulf the whole region of Central Asia.

Undoubtedly, we are dealing with a very complex situation. There is, however, no other choice but to continue to assist the parties in Afghanistan to overcome their differences. The active involvement of the international community is indispensable to the search for a peaceful solution to the human tragedy that is Afghanistan.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): We are deeply concerned about the renewal of large-scale fighting in Afghanistan since late September 1996. The recent developments in Afghanistan have exacerbated the mass suffering among the civilian population and are jeopardizing efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to those in dire need. Most alarmingly, they foreshadow a major setback to the international efforts to bring peace and stability to this war-stricken country.

The scourge of nearly two decades of war has taken an unimaginable toll upon the country and its people. The dismal situation in Afghanistan — characterized by a massive loss of human life, the aggravated suffering of the most vulnerable groups, the destruction of property and serious damage to the economic and social infrastructure — also poses a threat to the security and stability of other countries in the region. We believe that, now more than ever, the international community should renew its commitment to a peaceful solution to the Afghan conflict.

This is all the more important at a time when the efforts of the United Nations, through its Special Mission, are facing the risk of being stifled even before any significant initiative has been taken to bring the Afghan parties to the negotiating table. In the face of the escalation of the conflict, it is imperative that the Afghan parties cease immediately all hostilities so that the political process to create a broad-based Government acceptable to the Afghan people can be initiated without further delay.

The steps needed to bring about a peaceful solution to the situation in Afghanistan have already been set out in General Assembly resolution 50/88. These are the steps that the Afghan parties had already agreed upon and that the Security Council had welcomed in its presidential statement of 30 November 1994. We believe that the most important task for the international community at this critical juncture is to reaffirm the continued relevance and feasibility of these steps and encourage the Afghan parties to move towards these agreed measures.

In this regard, more resolute action by the international community is urgently called for. First, the flow of arms to the Afghan parties from outside has to be stopped to put an end to further military build-up in Afghanistan. This is a basic precondition for stabilizing the situation not only in Afghanistan itself but also in the region. As a corollary, States, particularly the neighbouring ones, must strictly refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and use their influence on the Afghan parties only in an impartial way to help the Afghan people determine their own destiny through peaceful means. We once again urge all States, particularly those neighbouring Afghanistan, to immediately review their policies towards Afghanistan in a manner that fully addresses the urgent need for an unconditional cease-fire to take effect and for a real political process to start in that country without any preconditions.

We believe that the Council should reaffirm the principles of national reconciliation, democracy, protection of human rights and the territorial integrity of Afghanistan. These principles ought to govern all the Afghan parties as well as all States in any effort they may make to resolve the conflict in Afghanistan. In the meantime, the suffering of the Afghan people must be alleviated by making all the Afghan parties fully observe international humanitarian law in all its aspects and by making those who violate it bear individual responsibility. Last but not least, we have to make sure that the involvement of certain Afghan parties in the narcotics trade, as reported by various sources, is not tolerated by the international community.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that the ultimate responsibility for finding a peaceful solution to the current situation in Afghanistan lies with the Afghan parties themselves. In this regard, we cannot fail to

express our deep concern about the lack of progress in starting a genuine all-Afghan dialogue for the establishment of an acceptable and broadly representative mechanism in which all segments of society, including all ethnic and religious groups, are represented. We once again call upon all the Afghan parties to renounce the use of force and settle their differences by peaceful means at the negotiating table rather than on the battlefield.

Finally, we commend and support the efforts of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan to bring about the restoration of peace, normal life and national reconciliation in this war-stricken country. My delegation stands ready to make due contribution as a responsible member of the international community towards the peaceful settlement of the situation in Afghanistan.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Today we are discussing a protracted and complex problem — a situation whose continuation represents a direct threat to international peace and security. Afghanistan has fallen victim to a destructive civil war and to intervention in support of the various Afghan factions by foreign Powers, which are providing military and other supplies.

The effects of the crisis in Afghanistan and of foreign intervention are not confined to the local arena. They have spilled over Afghanistan's borders, turning it into a stronghold for training and exporting extremists. This jeopardizes Afghanistan's relations with many countries of the region and has unduly exacerbated the domestic situation. In this respect, we recall that Egypt has suffered from terrorist activities perpetrated by foreign nationals trained in Afghanistan, the most recent of which was the bombing of the Egyptian embassy in Pakistan in November last year.

A sound analysis of the current situation in Afghanistan would confirm that the basic problem is not one of factionalism or ethnicity. It is a problem of the pursuit of power by various groups, supported from abroad by those who seek to achieve financial and military objectives completely unrelated to the interests of the Afghani people.

Only the people of Afghanistan can achieve national reconciliation among its factions. They are more than capable of establishing a Government that would enjoy full popular support in conditions of peace and stability.

Following the signing of the Geneva Accords in 1988, it was widely expected that the foreign parties would halt military assistance to the various Afghan factions and that the United Nations would focus its efforts on resolving the root causes of the civil war and on promoting national reconciliation. However, unfortunately, despite all the efforts made, past and current debates on the Afghan problem in the General Assembly and the numerous resolutions adopted on this matter, military and financial assistance to the warring factions in Afghanistan continue and the situation continues to deteriorate.

Recent developments threaten increased military confrontation, which would claim more casualties. In this context, I emphasize Egypt's total rejection of any attempt to undermine the sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and political independence of Afghanistan. I also aver that the recent developments require the Security Council immediately to initiate a process of national reconciliation through direct meetings among the various Afghani parties, to be arranged by the Secretary-General and the Head of the United Nations Special Mission in Afghanistan, Mr. Holl, who has made and continues to make efforts to halt the deterioration of the situation. I would also mention the importance of the idea of convening an international conference that would increase the chances for achieving a peaceful settlement.

Political efforts must be accompanied by a ceasefire and an end to the flow of arms to the warring factions. There are many precedents in the Council's work, set in similar circumstances. We hope the Council will adopt a position allowing for suitable measures to be taken in the near future in order to arrive at the desired result.

While we draft measures to be undertaken by the United Nations in Afghanistan and, in particular, by the Secretary-General and the Head of the Special Mission — to whom I pay a tribute for his important role — Egypt believes that it is very important to revise the role of the friends of the Secretary-General on Afghanistan, whose role has shrunk because their members were disappointed and pessimistic about an effective role for the United nations in resolving the problem. I believe that we must consider reforming that group to make it compatible with the important role it can play at this stage.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm the importance of national reconciliation in Afghanistan, the formation of a national coalition Government and the holding of national elections to preserve Afghanistan's sovereignty and

national unity under a unified presidency that enjoys the full support of the Afghani people.

Mr. Ferrarin (Italy): First of all, I wish to associate myself fully with the statement that Ireland is going to deliver in its capacity as Presidency of the European Union.

The international community is deeply troubled and shocked by the tragic conflict that is tearing asunder Afghanistan, a country rich in history, culture and tradition, a country that for centuries was the crossroads of different civilizations and that for far too many years has been the theatre for a seemingly endless conflict that has sown devastation and taken countless victims.

The taking of Kabul by the Taliban is the latest step in an escalating conflict that the United Nations has been following with concern for months, for two basic reasons: the humanitarian situation of the Afghan people and the risk that the spread of war — for we are talking here about a civil war that has split the country into opposing camps — will cause a chain reaction and jeopardize peace and stability in Central Asia.

It was not hard to foresee that the developments of late September in Kabul would have major repercussions on the civilian population of the capital and other cities. The Security Council expressed itself clearly on these events, reaffirming the principles of the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan. The deep-rooted nature of the conflict, the increasing bitterness of the clashes, and the widening of the battlefield with the entrance into the conflict of the heads of all the different factions make such predictions more realistic and worrisome.

The hostilities must cease immediately and the political negotiations must be relaunched quickly. For this we trust in the work of the Head of the United Nations Special Mission in Afghanistan, Mr. Holl. However, direct responsibility for a constructive resumption of the negotiations lies with the parties themselves. Given the conditions that beset the country, there is no room for uncompromising behaviour in the negotiations. A constructive dialogue must include all the parties on the basis of respect for an effective truce and renunciation of the use of force. Nor is there room for extremist views with regard to human rights, the treatment of the population and, particularly, the condition of women.

My delegation wishes firmly to reiterate that Afghanistan, whatever party may be in power, is required scrupulously to respect the principles established by the United Nations Charter and the guarantees provided in the field of human rights by several international treaties.

I wish to recall that Afghanistan, as one of the first countries to sign those treaties, is also bound by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. We are outraged by the treatment of women and girls in Afghanistan, which is contrary not only to basic human rights but also to the very interests of Afghanistan itself. In fact, the participation of women in the economic life of the country, the schooling of girls and respect for the individual are prerequisites for economic development, as is the establishment of democratic institutions. It is essential for the future of the country that this situation be corrected immediately.

What has happened in recent weeks in Kabul and in other Afghan cities seriously undermines the social fabric of the country and the future prospects of its economic development. Hence, it also compromises the international community's ability to assure sorely needed financial support and resources.

My delegation fully shares the positions expressed over the past few days by very prominent figures who have voiced the deep concern of the international community. I would like to recall the statements by the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Ayala Lasso, and the Commissioner of the European Community Humanitarian Office, Ms. Emma Bonino. We join their appeals for tolerance and responsibility, and we note their emphasis on the need to restore the foundations for peaceful coexistence and to settle differences through peaceful means.

We strongly hope that today's meeting of the Security Council will send a clear signal that the use of force is unacceptable to settle disputes between or within States and that violence against the people and violations of human rights are intolerable in the international community as it approaches the threshold of the year 2000.

Mr. Larraín (Chile)(*interpretation from Spanish*): Just six months ago, in April, the Security Council held a formal meeting in which many delegations participated

in an orientation debate over the grave crisis in Afghanistan.

At that time the international community expressed its serious concern at the continuation of the Afghan conflict and evidenced a real desire to give new impetus to negotiations and to help factions overcome their internal differences so that they could resume their progress towards reconstruction as soon as possible.

In conjunction with that, the Secretary-General took important steps aimed at strengthening and rationalizing the United Nations political presence in Afghanistan. The new head of the Special Mission to Afghanistan, Mr. Norbert Holl, to whom my delegation wishes to express its appreciation and reiterate its full support, has made enormous efforts in recent months to bring about a cessation of hostilities and a negotiated transfer of power in Kabul through the establishment of a fully representative and broad-based council of State.

My delegation strongly believes that the parties involved cannot continue indefinitely to ignore the international community's appeal to halt the armed conflict, set aside their differences and undertake to join in a broad political negotiating process.

My delegation believes that the measures adopted by the General Assembly in February of this year could lead to an immediate start of national reconciliation and the resurgence of Afghanistan. The establishment of a broad-based transitional Government acceptable to all Afghans is a necessary first step to establishing the bases for peace and national reconstruction.

The dynamic events of the past few weeks should encourage us to devise a clear means of reaching the first stages of reconciliation and agreement among all the Afghan factions. Their leaders must realize that victory by force of arms is illusory and can lead only to continued suffering for the entire population, which, already weakened by war, truly desires reconciliation and peace.

Along with the appeal to the leaders of the factions to support political negotiations over armed conflict, we must also urge that, without further delay, an end be put to foreign intervention in the Afghan conflict. The people of Afghanistan have suffered enormous losses because of that phenomenon. Full respect for Afghanistan's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, as well as the right of the people to determine their own future, cannot continue to be mere rhetorical figures. The international community, including neighbouring States and others of the region, must contribute to ensuring respect for this principle, which is enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Illicit arms trafficking and the flow of arms to parties to the conflict, for whatever motive, provide support to those who advocate the military solution to the conflict over negotiated agreements. We believe that it is time to put an end to such trafficking and that the United Nations should encourage a process of disarmament for all the factions, using the positive experience acquired in other regions in this regard.

Consideration of a possible arms embargo, an initiative already proposed in the Security Council, is one possibility my delegation believes deserving of thorough consideration, and we would support it. Linked to the problem of armaments is the serious scourge of drug trafficking, which we believe must also be dealt with decisively, since it clearly poses a threat to any effort to bring about the country's social and economic reconstruction.

We appeal to the international community to lend its support and generous assistance to the stage of reconstruction, which, we hope, will begin very soon. However, we must bear in mind that it is Afghan people themselves who must do everything in their power to bind the wounds of war and re-establish their institutions, rebuild the social fabric and reconstruct a State that has fallen apart after long years of war and suffering.

Another aspect of the conflict that is of serious concern to my delegation are the recent violations of international humanitarian law. No Afghan faction, on the pretext of respecting cultural or religious tradition, can trample on the human rights of the population or limit basic freedoms.

We therefore call for a repeal of the excessive measures that have been taken against the people by the Taliban leaders about which the press has written to extensively this week. These are particularly discriminatory against women, and they are not only a serious violation of international humanitarian law but also create greater hardships for Afghan families and slow down the economic recovery so vital today.

Lastly, we would like to express our pleasure at seeing the neighbouring countries of Central Asia participating in the debate today. We believe that they

have a great deal to contribute in the form of needed regional cooperation to help restore peace and stability in Afghanistan.

We cannot allow fear, insecurity and tragedy to continue to threaten the stability of this strategic region, which, as this century draws to a close and a new millennium dawns, should have a better future.

Mr. Qin Huasun (China)(*interpretation from Chinese*): The recent changes in the political and military situation of Afghanistan have caused widespread concern among the international community and particularly among the countries neighbouring Afghanistan, which fear that the escalation of the internal conflict in Afghanistan might endanger their border security. The letters before us from the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakstan, as well as the numerous statements we have heard today, give expression to that concern.

We understand such concerns and anxiety. As a friendly neighbour of Afghanistan, China is also concerned about changes and developments in the Afghan situation. We sincerely hope that the open debate in the Council today will be conducive to the peaceful settlement of the conflict in Afghanistan.

The Chinese delegation is of the view that the key to the attainment of this goal is the realization of genuine national reconciliation, which, however, depends mainly on the parties in Afghanistan. It can be said that the key to national reconciliation is in their hands. Therefore, we hope that the parties will soon resolve their political, religious and racial differences, immediately stop armed conflicts in the general interest of the country and nation, and establish through peaceful negotiations, under the auspices of the United Nations and the international community, a broadly based and stable government acceptable to all parties. We are confident that the Afghan people are fully capable of resolving their own problems.

We appreciate the unremitting efforts made by the United Nations and the international community to promote the political settlement of the Afghan conflict and hope that all parties will continue to play a constructive role to this end. The prolonged ravages and disruptions of war in Afghanistan have brought tremendous sufferings to the Afghan people. They are also detrimental to peace and stability in the neighbouring countries and the region at large. Only when genuine national reconciliation and stability is achieved in Afghanistan will the Afghan people be able to rebuild their homeland and live and work in peace and contentment. We sincerely hope that peace and stability will come early to Afghanistan.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): There are still a number of speakers remaining. However, in view of the lateness of the hour, and with the consent of the members of the Council, I shall suspend the meeting at this point.

The meeting was suspended at 1.15 p.m. and resumed at 3.20 p.m.

Mr. Cabral (Guinea-Bissau) (*interpretation from French*): The Security Council debate on the situation in Afghanistan is most timely, as we are seeing an upsurge of violence in that country as war rages ever more furiously. The international community cannot be a silent witness to the deterioration of the situation, nor can it be unaware of the dangerous consequences of the conflict in Afghanistan. One glance at a map of the world is enough proof. We would like to express our gratitude to the representatives of the Russian Federation and to the four members of the Commonwealth of Independent States for requesting a meeting of the Security Council on this subject.

The delegation of Guinea-Bissau expresses its deep concern at the scale and intensification of the fighting, which has claimed many victims among the civilian population and led to a new wave of refugees and displaced persons. We are also dismayed at the violations of the most fundamental human rights, particularly those of women and young girls, who are now facing all kinds of obstacles that prevent them from reaching their full potential.

We note and deplore the fact that the consequences of the war in Afghanistan are increasingly affecting neighbouring States, directly threatening their national interests and security. It is clear that the conflict in Afghanistan is having a destabilizing effect throughout the region.

The delegation of Guinea-Bissau would like to reaffirm its commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan.

We urge all parties to cease hostilities and end the fighting. We invite them to cooperate with the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan, whose tireless efforts we applaud, to reach a comprehensive political

settlement to the conflict that is tearing the country apart and causing great suffering to the Afghan people. The conflict in Afghanistan cannot be settled by fighting. National reconciliation should, most certainly, be encouraged through negotiations among all the parties involved, free from any outside interference. It is essential that an immediate ceasefire be declared and conditions created that are conducive to the formation of a government of national union that would incorporate all elements of the Afghan population. It is also important to cut off the flow of arms at its source.

We call upon the parties to the conflict to respect their obligations and to honour their commitments regarding the security of the personnel of the United Nations and related bodies, in particular of the humanitarian organizations that are attempting to satisfy the many urgent needs of the Afghan people, a people that for several years has been suffering the torments of a war fuelled by endless rivalry. The humanitarian assistance provided by the United Nations and other international and non-governmental organizations, in highly precarious security conditions, to alleviate the suffering of this people deserves our deepest gratitude. But we have to point out that the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance continues to be hindered by the lack of a political settlement of the conflict, and to hinge on such a settlement.

The situation in Afghanistan demands rapid and concerted action by the international community. The Security Council must be in a position to act along these lines, taking into account all aspects of the Afghan issue and the views of all the parties concerned.

We hope that today's debate will contribute to a correct understanding of what is at stake, taking into better account the serious consequences of this conflict for the Afghan people, as well as for the countries of the region and for international peace and security.

Mr. Matuszewski (Poland): This is the second time this year that members of the Security Council have had the opportunity to discuss the situation in Afghanistan and to hear the views of other countries concerned with this extremely difficult issue.

Six months ago the participants in the Security Council's open debate on Afghanistan restated their commitment to a negotiated settlement of the Afghan crisis. Many of them underlined the importance of implementing the principles enunciated in General Assembly resolution 50/88 B. In particular, they reaffirmed their support for ongoing United Nations efforts to establish a fully representative and broad-based authoritative council as the most appropriate mechanism leading towards national reconciliation in Afghanistan. They were in agreement that the mandated tasks of that body should include, *inter alia*, to negotiate and oversee an immediate and durable ceasefire; to create and control a national security force to provide for security throughout the country through various undertakings; and to form an acceptable transitional government. Obviously, for these objectives to be attained, political will for peace among the warring Afghan parties was needed.

Unfortunately, over the past six months the warring factions in Afghanistan have not renounced the idea of a military solution to the conflict. On the contrary, there has been no end to their protracted armed struggle, and no progress towards a comprehensive peaceful settlement. The situation has been constantly deteriorating; the prospects for stability are gradually fading.

The lack of normalization in Afghanistan has led to the build-up of tensions, which persist around its perimeter. The events unfolding over the last few weeks in Afghanistan have aroused serious concern in the international community. Military confrontation, as its recent intensification clearly proves, leads nowhere.

All warring factions and all political forces in Afghanistan must understand that it is not possible to govern the country without embarking upon a serious political dialogue aimed at national reconciliation. Continued adherence by the parties to military options can only perpetuate the present ordeal and will ultimately threaten the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Afghanistan, with all the ensuing consequences for the whole region.

The recent developments in Afghanistan again brought to the attention of the international community the other grave consequences of the conflict, namely the humanitarian situation of the population and the problem of human rights. According to international aid organizations, the takeover of Kabul brought about the exodus of as many as 250,000 residents, who fled to northern areas of the country and to neighbouring Pakistan. In our view, the negative impact of such phenomena on the future of Afghanistan can hardly be overestimated. It is worth noting as well that events of this kind constitute in themselves a destabilizing factor in the overall situation in Afghanistan.

The same can be said about matters such as the dramatic deterioration of the social and economic status of women in Afghanistan, which contravenes the provisions of relevant international treaties. We call upon the parties concerned in Afghanistan to respect the human rights of their people. We also appeal for tolerance and moderation in the exercise of control in all its dimensions over the various parts of the territory of Afghanistan.

The Polish delegation is gravely concerned at recent developments in Afghanistan and at the prospect of continuing military hostilities. At this critical juncture we wish to reaffirm our well-known position with regard to Afghanistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as to the right of the Afghan people to determine their own destiny. Hence, we call again upon all States in a position to do so to assist the people of Afghanistan in their search for a peaceful future in their country. In this context, we wish to point to the critical importance of restraint: restraint should be exercised by all concerned with regard to supplying the parties with weapons and other war-related materials.

Just as it did six months ago, the Polish delegation continues to believe that only genuine national reconciliation and respect for the interests of all the ethnic and religious groups in Afghanistan, as well as for the centuries-long tradition of Afghan statehood, can provide a real basis for a peaceful settlement of the conflict. The warring factions in Afghanistan should accept the fact that their country is the common heritage of all Afghans and that the development and reconstruction of Afghanistan can only be enhanced through the participation of all ethnic and cultural groups in the affairs of the country.

My delegation is still of the opinion that the United Nations has an important role to play in bringing about the cessation of civil war in Afghanistan and in achieving a peaceful settlement to the Afghan conflict. We support the diplomatic efforts of Mr. Norbert Holl, Head of the United Nations Special Mission in Afghanistan, to mediate between the warring parties and to bring them to the negotiating table. In view of the seriousness of the situation, we declare our readiness to examine ways in which the Security Council can respond to the challenges posed by the present state of affairs in Afghanistan.

These are the comments of my delegation, in addition to the statement which is to be delivered by the presidency of the European Union, who will speak also on behalf of Poland.

Mrs. Albright (United States of America): Members of the Council and others who share our concern about the situation in Afghanistan: the political and military situation in Afghanistan has been dramatically altered by events of the past few weeks. The immediate future is uncertain. Fighting continues, and it is possible that Kabul itself may once again be overrun. The result would be more casualties, more refugees and still more uncertainty.

The position of the United States with respect to this turmoil has not changed. We call upon all parties to stop fighting and to begin negotiations aimed at a political settlement. There can be no lasting military solution to this conflict. There can be no durable peace in Afghanistan until a broad-based government is formed which represents and respects the rights of all of Afghanistan's diverse peoples.

In this connection, we want to express our continued support for the efforts of the United Nations Special Mission headed by Mr. Norbert Holl and his team of political advisers. So far, the parties have not cooperated actively or fully with the Special Mission in the search for peace. Nevertheless, the Mission remains prepared and determined to assist the Afghan parties. The Mission is in contact with all the groups and is uniquely placed to serve as an impartial facilitator among them.

The United States reiterates its concern about the dangers of foreign interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs and urges all outside parties to refrain from meddling. We urge the regional Powers and all of Afghanistan's neighbours to work together with the United Nations to encourage the Afghan parties to move towards peace. The recent summit in Almaty highlighted the concerns of neighbouring States about regional stability and underscored the urgency of an Afghan political settlement. In particular, this body and the General Assembly have repeatedly warned against supplying the belligerents with arms and supplies. We continue to support an arms embargo; we believe that the flow of arms to the warring parties only perpetuates the fighting and makes it less likely that they will come to the negotiating table.

My Government urges the international community to continue working together, with the parties, to establish a process that will unite Afghanistan and that will lead to a future characterized by stability, economic recovery and law. Such a future would contribute to stability elsewhere in the region, reduce the illegal flows

of arms and narcotics and result in a closing of the military training camps that have supported terrorist activities in the region and beyond.

In pursuing this outcome, my Government does not support or favour any particular party, faction, movement or individual in this conflict. We are interested not in personalities, but in outcomes. Accordingly, we have maintained contacts with all of the major groups over the years, and we will continue to do so.

I want to emphasize that the United States remains concerned that all parties in Afghanistan respect international human rights standards. Every Member of the United Nations is obliged to uphold the provisions of the Charter, which affirms the principle of equal rights for men and women. In parts of Afghanistan today, this principle is being shredded.

We see decrees being issued in the name of stability that would essentially deprive women of all rights, except the right to remain silent, indoors, uneducated and invisible. If the reports we receive are accurate, women and girls are being denied the chance to work, to go to school and to participate freely in the day-to-day life of their communities. Even minor violations can lead to vicious beatings. This approach to women's rights cannot be justified or defended. It is medieval.

It will, if continued, doom prospects for economic and social progress in Afghanistan. It will make it extremely difficult or impossible for the international community to administer badly needed humanitarian aid and it should be opposed strongly by the Security Council, by the United Nations and by all civilized peoples.

Despite the current difficult circumstances, my Government hopes that international relief agencies will do all they can, consistent with a requirement to adhere to international human-rights norms, to maintain the flow of humanitarian and relief assistance to those in desperate need in Afghanistan. We urge those in authority to cooperate with these aid agencies and not to hamper the flow of assistance.

The years of bitter fighting have deeply divided the Afghan people. As a result, the process of forming a true national government will not come easily or be completed soon. However, we continue to hope that each faction will come to understand that Afghanistan will be stronger, more prosperous, more independent and more durable if the parties now fighting are able to unite, to pool their energies and resources and to begin pulling the country back together, rather than continuing senselessly and inconclusively to tear it apart.

Accordingly, we renew our call to the leaders of each party to cease pursuing the fool's gold of a military victory and to turn their efforts towards the real reward of a political settlement that will last. We urge them to stop fighting, resume talking, observe international standards of human rights and act in accordance with the best interests of all the people of Afghanistan.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Honduras.

Honduras views with the utmost concern the events in Afghanistan, a country afflicted by an interminable civil war that is continuing to sap its economy and damaging the security and well-being of its people. The prospects for peace and stability in Afghanistan seem to be receding as the Taliban movement and the forces of the previous Government continue to resort to military force to achieve their objectives.

My delegation reminds the Afghan parties that the resort to force is not a viable option in the search for a solution to the Afghan conflict. The parties must resort to peaceful means by beginning, first and foremost, a dialogue that will enable them to reach a broad, political settlement restoring peace and leading them to national reconciliation.

We consider that the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan is playing a major role in promoting a peaceful solution to the conflict. Accordingly, we would urge the parties to cooperate with the Special Mission to achieve that objective.

My delegation is also concerned that recent political events may further aggravate the situation of human rights in Afghanistan. We appeal to the Afghan parties to respect the fundamental human rights of the civilian population and scrupulously to abide by international humanitarian law.

In the current situation of civil war and political instability in Afghanistan, the sense of insecurity prevailing throughout the country is fuelled by the constant flow of arms and munitions sent to Afghan factions from other countries. We remind all States that

it is necessary to comply with the relevant resolutions on the illicit traffic of weapons.

Finally, my delegation wishes to reiterate its appeal to the Afghan parties that, for the sake of peace and national reconciliation, they desist from armed struggle, establish a ceasefire and begin a constructive dialogue, in cooperation with the United Nations, leading to peace.

I now resume my function as President of the Security Council.

The next speaker is the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kharrazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Let me begin by expressing my congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I would also like to pay tribute to the representative of Guinea-Bissau for the manner in which he guided the Council during last month.

We welcome the initiative of the Security Council to consider the situation in Afghanistan, in accordance with the Almaty declaration. The problem of Afghanistan, the untold suffering and misery of its people, and the instability it has caused in the region have received only scant international attention in the past five years. The international community, and particularly those with a greater degree of influence, have long been aloof to the violence, bloodshed and collapse of the collective-security doctrine in Afghanistan.

Following the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan, the people of that country were, regrettably, trapped in a vicious circle of violence and fratricide, which further added to the terrible plight of the Afghan people and the destruction of the country's infrastructures.

As a neighbouring country linked to Afghanistan by many commonalities beyond merely having common borders, the Islamic Republic of Iran has adopted a twofold policy towards the situation in Afghanistan from the very beginning. We have rendered humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan by hosting millions of its refugees and by sending the basic needs of the Afghan people to that country, often on a daily basis. At the same time, we have spared no effort to encourage the warring factions in Afghanistan to settle their differences through dialogue and peaceful means.

High-ranking officials of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran have spent weeks and months in different parts of Afghanistan to facilitate such a dialogue between different factions. The fratricidal conflict between Afghan factions — all of which are Islamic — was so appalling to the Islamic Republic of Iran that our leader found it imperative to intervene above and beyond Government contacts and to appeal in the name of Islam to all Afghan leaders to put an end to violence and bloodshed.

In August 1995, the personal envoy of the leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran met with the leaders of Afghan factions and delivered the personal message of Ayatollah Khamenei to the effect that, in his judgement, further violence, bloodshed and fratricide in Afghanistan are unjustified on the basis of Islam, and thus Afghan leaders are under Islamic duty to proscribe them.

Despite the recent developments and the escalation of violence in Afghanistan, our basic policy towards that country remains the same. We continue to believe that this unfortunate conflict in Afghanistan has no military solution. All Afghan parties and those who are concerned about the situation in Afghanistan should be cognizant of the fact that peace and stability cannot be restored to that country through war. In our opinion, there is no justification for the violence and bloodshed in Afghanistan and no faction or State can endorse the ongoing violence in the name of Islam. There is already a convenient tendency to label Islam as a religion of the past, ill-equipped to deal with modern problems. Muslims must therefore avoid attributing to Islam policies and practices that are evidently not only un-Islamic but also anti-Islamic, so as not to fuel this flame.

The transitory and temporary nature of ongoing developments in Afghanistan is indicative of the fact that only through the cessation of hostilities and the establishment of a broad-based Government composed of all religious and ethnic groups and supported by the people of Afghanistan can peace and security be guaranteed in that country. The international community, countries in the region and others with influence should support and facilitate the establishment of these two important goals. The Security Council should play its role in this regard and adopt effective measures to set in place mechanisms for the immediate cessation of hostilities and the establishment of a broad-based Government. Likewise the General Assembly, which mandated the Special Mission to Afghanistan, should redouble its efforts to fulfil the obligation of the Organization towards one of its

Members. Needless to say, only a broad-based Government free from foreign interference can protect and guarantee the rights of all Afghan people.

Afghanistan has been a united and sovereign State and should remain so. Any idea of undermining the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Afghanistan will surely have a disastrous impact on the security of the region as a whole. In this context, while underlining the right of Afghan people to choose their own path, the Islamic Republic of Iran cannot remain indifferent to developments that might affect its national security.

We are determined, as we were in the past, to cooperate and coordinate with the neighbouring State of Afghanistan, the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to bring peace and security to Afghanistan and to our region. In this context, given the recent developments in Afghanistan, we have redoubled our efforts to convene a regional conference in Tehran later this month, with the participation of regional foreign ministers and representatives of the United Nations and of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Furthermore, we believe that the idea of holding a United Nations meeting of interested countries to emphasize the concerns of the international community on the situation in Afghanistan is attractive and deserves serious consideration.

After nearly two decades of harsh reality, misery and loss of life, it is time for the international community to set aside political expediencies and narrow national interests and rivalries to enable the Afghan people to enjoy a life of peace, security and tranquillity. The international community should shoulder its responsibility and help the Afghan people to realize this long-overdue but simple dream. The Islamic Republic of Iran stands ready to actively participate in any initiative or measures which aim to stop further violence and bloodshed, and bring peace and security to Afghanistan and to the region as a whole.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Turkey. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Çelem (Turkey): The question of Afghanistan is once again on the agenda of the Security Council. My delegation welcomes this timely meeting as an opportunity to focus the attention of the international community on the serious and deteriorating situation in Afghanistan. My country's close ties with Afghanistan and the Afghan people are deep-rooted in history. I would go so far as to say that a special relationship exists between my country and Afghanistan.

We are deeply concerned about the recent turn of events in Afghanistan. The encouraging changes that took place on the Afghan political scene, after a long and painful struggle for the liberation of the country, have gradually been overtaken by developments that deepen our pessimism. It is regrettable to note that the fratricidal conflict continues unabated. The consequences of this enormous human tragedy have affected large segments of the population, devastated the entire country, and dashed the hopes and expectations of millions of people both inside and outside Afghanistan. Most discouraging of all is that the military option still seems to be the course of action preferred by the parties. These parties show no genuine desire for a serious dialogue which, in our opinion, remains the only way out of the present impasse. It does not take a prophet to state that the continuation of this senseless civil war will produce no winner. It will simply bring more destruction to Afghanistan and further suffering to its people. Today, the developments in Afghanistan are a matter of grave concern and anguish for us because they are rapidly acquiring a dimension which, through a possible spillover effect, might threaten peace and stability in the entire region, leading to a crisis situation of unmanageable proportions.

The situation in Afghanistan clearly warrants the continued concern of the international community, which has identified the essential political elements for the restoration of peace and a return to normalcy in Afghanistan. These elements are contained in General Assembly resolution 50/88 of 19 December 1995, adopted by consensus. With this resolution, we, the Member States, committed ourselves:

> "*(a)* To respect Afghanistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity, strictly to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and to respect the right of the Afghan people to determine their own destiny;
>
> *(b)* To take all steps necessary to promote peace in Afghanistan, to stop the flow of arms and of equipment related to arms production to all parties

and to put an end to this destructive conflict." *(resolution 50/88 B, para. 9)*

At this stage, these two points constitute the cornerstone of the international community's responsibility towards Afghanistan.

We also fully support the statement made on 28 September 1996 by the President of the Security Council on behalf of the Council, by which the Security Council reaffirmed its commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan.

In these circumstances, what is most urgently needed is an immediate and unconditional cessation of all armed hostilities. That should be the principal objective of all efforts by the international community aimed at bringing peace to Afghanistan. Otherwise, it will not be possible to envisage an effective process of national reconciliation. It is time for the Security Council to give a new impetus to the efforts of the United Nations Special Mission in Afghanistan, headed by Mr. Holl, to bring together the leaders in Afghan groups in order to negotiate an immediate and durable ceasefire and to resolve their internal political differences. This will facilitate national reconciliation with a view to the restoration of a fully representative, broad-based Government and also to the start of the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction of this country, as affirmed in the preambular part of General Assembly resolution 50/88 B.

It should be stressed, however, that the primary responsibility for bringing the devastating war in Afghanistan to an end lies with the warring parties, as the destiny of Afghanistan can and will be determined only by the people of the country. We therefore appeal once again to all sides in the Afghan conflict, in particular to their leaders, to lay down their arms and agree on a national reconciliation process conducive to the restoration of Afghan statehood.

In this respect, my country attaches special importance to the continuation of the constructive role the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) has been playing to forge a common understanding among the parties in Afghanistan and welcomes the recent decision of the Secretary-General of the OIC, Mr. Hamid Algabid, to send another OIC mission to Afghanistan. We understand that the efforts of the OIC will be conducted, as in the past, in close cooperation and coordination with the United Nations Special Mission and will be complementary in nature to those of the United Nations.

My country will continue to follow developments in Afghanistan closely and remain ready to do whatever it can to contribute to the normalization of the situation in this brotherly country. As already declared by the Turkish Foreign Minister at the General Assembly almost a fortnight ago, we stand ready to hold a meeting in Turkey with the participation of all parties to the Afghan conflict, under the auspices of the United Nations, to help to bring about reconciliation and a settlement based on the territorial integrity, sovereignty, independence and unity of Afghanistan.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of India. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Shah (India): It is my privilege to address the Security Council again this month under your presidency. The unsettled conditions in Afghanistan have a direct and adverse fallout on peace and security in the region and affect my country.

India's relations with Afghanistan stretch back into remote history. Ties of friendship, culture and religion bind the people of India and Afghanistan together. We have an abiding interest in the stability of Afghanistan. India gives its full support to the unity, independence and territorial integrity of Afghanistan. We therefore supported General Assembly resolution 50/88 of December 1995 which, *inter alia*, laid down the guidelines for the peace process in Afghanistan. That resolution also provides that the peace process may be implemented with the assistance of the United Nations Special Mission.

We have followed the recent developments in Afghanistan with deep concern. The eruption of renewed fighting in September, which led to the fall of Kabul, has created a dangerous new situation of great fluidity. The present round of hostilities began towards the end of August when the Taliban forces moved against Government forces. Thereafter, the Taliban forces moved into Nangarhar province and took Jalalabad on 11 September. They proceeded towards Surobi, which fell on 24 September, and captured Kabul in the early hours of 27 September. They followed the retreating forces of Commander Masood to the north with the objective of capturing Panjshir Valley. Recent reports indicate that

hostilities have not ceased and Taliban forces have reportedly suffered military setbacks north of Kabul.

The Taliban offensive occurred while the Head of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan was engaged in active parleys with different parties in Afghanistan to examine ways of bringing them together so that peace could be achieved. Some other countries, both from the region and outside, were also engaged in active diplomacy regarding Afghanistan. The Taliban offensive resulted in the Security Council's presidential statement of 28 September 1996, which reaffirmed support for United Nations efforts to bring peace in Afghanistan and called upon all States to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

Within Afghanistan itself, the Government of President Rabbani, recognized by India, had taken an active and sincere interest in promoting an intra-Afghan dialogue, and it was in pursuit of that dialogue that the Government itself had been broadened, with the inclusion of Gulbudin Hekmatyar.

Throughout this period some groups remained intransigent and refused to engage in any negotiations or discussions with other groups. Peace can only return to Afghanistan if all groups accept the proposition that they cannot achieve their objectives through violent means. A new system has to be evolved. This can be achieved by the Afghan parties if they are all committed to the unity, independence and territorial integrity of Afghanistan. For its part, India remains fully committed to this fact.

Afghanistan has suffered from foreign interference. There is ample evidence to show that some Afghan parties that have engaged in violent activities have been supported, trained and actively assisted by foreign powers. It is only through the cessation of foreign interference that peace and stability can return to Afghanistan.

The ideological orientations of the Taliban are a source of concern. Their wanton disregard of human rights, especially the rights of women, has given rise to misgivings all over the world. This also led the United Nations Secretary-General to issue on 7 October 1996 a statement on the status of women and girls in Afghanistan. The brutal murder of Najibullah and his brother was against all canons of civilized behaviour and has attracted condemnation. India shares the widespread sense of outrage at this act. The traditional ethos of Afghanistan must be maintained. Any authority or group that seeks to undermine this ethos not only goes against the history of Afghanistan but is bound to fail.

The Afghan people must find a solution to this situation by themselves. India fully supports the efforts of the Secretary- General and the Head of the Special Mission to Afghanistan, and is willing to contribute to these efforts. India has had active programmes of economic and technical assistance in Afghanistan. Even during the unsettled conditions, we have continued our humanitarian assistance. As part of this assistance, India organized a programme of fitting artificial limbs in Afghanistan between 19 August and 23 September. Over 1100 Afghans benefited from this programme by receiving artificial legs.

We are deeply saddened by the violence and the consequent loss of life and suffering. We call for peaceful negotiations among Afghan parties to settle all outstanding issues. We once again want to emphasize that the cessation of foreign interference is necessary for a resolution of the conflict. My delegation would therefore reiterate India's support of the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General and the Head of the Special Mission to Afghanistan to bring peace to Afghanistan. India is prepared to play its full part in these and other international efforts aimed at bringing peace to Afghanistan.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the hope I expressed in the Council on 9 April 1996 while speaking on the situation in Afghanistan. We trust that the outcome of this debate will help the Council and the Secretary-General to focus on what must be urgently done in Afghanistan with a view to restoring peace and stability and promoting development in that country.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The next speaker is His Excellency Mr. Engin A. Ansay, Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, to whom the Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure. I now invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ansay (Organization of the Islamic Conference): On behalf of the General Secretariat of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), I thank you, Sir, for calling on me to address the Council on the situation in Afghanistan.

At the outset, I should like to take this opportunity to extend to you my warmest congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I am confident that your professional skills and rich experience in the international arena will serve you well in leading and directing the complex work of the Security Council at this difficult time. I should also like to take this opportunity to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Cabral, the Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau, for steering the work of the Council so ably during the month of September.

At this meeting the OIC once again joins the United Nations, as it is continuing to do at the field level, in expressing its serious concern at the unfortunate turn that the Afghan conflict has taken in the past few weeks, and especially in the past few days, which have added to the enormous loss of life, heavy injuries and colossal destruction of property that the nation has endured since its liberation. Throughout the years of civil war my organization has focused unreservedly on endeavours to promote a cessation of hostilities in Afghanistan so that the necessary climate for a credible peace process leading to the formation of a broad-based representative government can be created.

In our contacts with the various Afghan leaders, especially during OIC missions to that country, including the two that I led in July and August 1995, we have consistently tried to show them the futility of resorting to the use of force and seeking a military solution instead of negotiating a common workable settlement to their present predicament. We have tried to help them to realize, through the lessons of history, that the results of a heroic struggle for liberation from foreign invaders are normally very different from those of wresting the reins of government from their own people, in their own land, through means that are not lawful or peaceful. A solution forced from the inside that does not carry the sincere commitment of all, cannot last and, more often than not, has a boomerang effect.

While we all continue, as we must, to advocate neutrality and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, we cannot remain oblivious to the fact that the effects of instability and chaos in the country are also felt beyond its borders. Let us recognize, therefore, that what is happening inside Afghanistan cannot leave its neighbours completely unaffected, and that the return of peace and tranquillity to Afghanistan would bring relief, in both political and economic terms, to the Governments and peoples of those other countries, which have also been, in varying degrees, the victims of, first, foreign occupation, and now of civil war in Afghanistan.

To discourage the unstable conditions from continuing and to prevent further escalation of the internal armed conflict, we believe that it behooves all States to play a constructive role by preventing the sale and supply of arms to any and all factions in Afghanistan at this time. Their role in preventing the harbouring and training of terrorists and in eliminating the devastating drug traffic will also be crucial to the containment of the present problem in Afghanistan.

We in the OIC are complementing the United Nations in our collective efforts to assist the diverse Afghan leadership, to the extent that it is humanly possible within our limited means, to bring back peace and tranquillity to the country and to restore, among other things, the precious human rights, including those of women and children, that have been so trampled in the turmoil. Towards this end, a number of high-level OIC missions have been sent to Afghanistan. During these missions, discussions with various Afghan leaders led to the proposal and active pursuit of the idea of convening, in accordance with relevant United Nations and OIC resolutions, a meeting of representatives of all Afghan factions, from inside and outside Afghanistan, to explore and develop a commonly acceptable framework for addressing the country's political and security issues, including a peaceful transfer of power.

While renewing the call for such a broad-based meeting of Afghan leaders, we now believe, especially in the light of the latest developments, that it might be useful, as a preliminary and complementary move, to advocate the convening of an informal meeting of representatives of the interested Governments that would be in a position to assist the Afghan leaders in their reconciliation process and in the eventual rehabilitation of their country and its people. My organization is prepared to work with the United Nations in convening such an informal meeting of the representatives of other interested States and, subsequently, a meeting of the leaders of the various Afghan factions in any location agreeable to the participants, in pursuit of the objectives to which I referred.

I should like to take this opportunity to inform the Council that a high-level OIC mission is about to visit Afghanistan to complement United Nations efforts for reconciliation that are currently under way. I shall be joining that mission.

In conclusion, I should like to reiterate the numerous calls of the Secretary General of the OIC, Mr. Hamid Algabid, the most recent of which was voiced here in New York only a few days ago, for the immediate cessation of hostilities in Afghanistan by all States and factions, for the prevention of the sale and supply of arms to all factions in Afghanistan and for the immediate introduction of confidence-building measures, including an informal meeting of interested countries to assist in the peace process. This would be followed by the convening of a meeting of representatives of various Afghan parties and personalities, and of important segments of Afghan society, to evolve an agreed programme for promoting a peaceful settlement of the Afghan problem.

I should like to reassure the Council of my organization's full commitment to playing a constructive role complementary to that of the United Nations in facilitating the mission of the United Nations representative, Mr. Holl, and the overall peace process in Afghanistan.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I thank the Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Owada (Japan): The dire situation that has prevailed in Afghanistan for some years now, and the consequent plight of the Afghan people, cannot but cause concern and a sense of alarm in the international community. We have been closely following recent events in the wake of the Taliban's seizure of Kabul and the counter-offensive by the Rabbani faction to the north of the capital. The Government and people of Japan share the deep concern expressed by previous speakers over the continued fighting and the tremendous suffering that it has caused the Afghan people.

Japan is profoundly aware that the continued hostilities among the various Afghan factions threaten the territorial integrity and unity of Afghanistan and pose a threat to Nations neighbouring countries and to the stability of the region. The situation also seriously hampers efforts to tackle drug problems and international terrorism. In this situation, it is important that we be clear about the basic principles that we should uphold in our common interest to restore peace and order in that conflict-torn country. First, no infringement of the principle of the territorial integrity and unity of Afghanistan should be allowed. Secondly, no foreign intervention which could render the conflict in Afghanistan even more complex and intractable should be tolerated. Thirdly, no country should attempt to expand its influence by providing arms and money to various factions; rather, they are strongly urged to use their influence with the Afghan factions to help the United Nations facilitate a lasting peace settlement.

What can we in the international community do in this difficult situation to help mitigate the suffering of the people of Afghanistan and to bring about a cessation of hostilities that would lead to a more lasting peace? Japan believes that there is a role that the United Nations can and should play, even in this intractable situation. First and foremost, the mediating role of the United Nations has to be re-evaluated and reinforced, in particular through an intensified framework of cooperation by the countries in the region and other interested countries.

The Afghan parties should also be urged to work more closely with the mediating efforts of the United Nations Special Mission, led by Mr. Norbert Holl. Japan continues to support those efforts, and recently sent a political affairs officer to participate in the Special Mission. On the basis of such cooperation on the part of all the Afghan parties, a further proactive initiative by the United Nations could be envisaged as a constructive step towards the attainment of national reconciliation, with the ultimate aim of establishing a broad-based government in Afghanistan.

While the details would have to be considered carefully, Japan would, in principle, be supportive of the idea of holding, under United Nations auspices, an international meeting among concerned countries to exchange views on how to help the Afghan parties work out a peace settlement. Japan has been maintaining close and impartial contacts with the various Afghan parties, and is inclined to think that with proper and elaborate preparation, the Afghan parties might be persuaded to listen to the call of the international community to work out a political settlement. Indeed, Japan could consider hosting a meeting among them if and when such an offer would assist in bringing the parties to the negotiating table.

It may also be important to consider, in conjunction with such an approach, the possibility of organizing a forum in which to examine what possibilities there are for offering the hands of help and support to the Afghan parties for post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation,

once the Afghan parties themselves demonstrate the political will to achieve a settlement. Japan is prepared to make an appropriate contribution in this regard.

Let me conclude my brief statement by reiterating that, while the situation in Afghanistan is a problem that concerns us all, there can be no real progress toward peace until the Afghan parties themselves lay down their arms and bring an end to the hostilities that are devastating their country. The people of Afghanistan should be entitled to have the chance to realize what it is like to live in peace, and to strive for that realization with the help of the international community.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of Ireland. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Campbell (Ireland): I am grateful for this opportunity to address the Council on behalf of the European Union. The following associated countries have aligned themselves with this statement: Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Iceland and Norway also wish to align themselves with this statement.

Conflict in Afghanistan has for far too long divided its people and brought destruction and suffering to that country. Recent developments have seen an intensification of hostilities, which continues to prejudice the essential conditions for peace and stability, without which a society cannot make economic or political progress. The European Union calls for the immediate cessation of armed hostilities and urgently exhorts the leaders of all the Afghan parties to renounce the use of force and to engage in political dialogue, which alone can bring about a peaceful settlement of the present conflict. The European Union attaches great importance to the readiness of the United Nations to assist this dialogue and to support every effort undertaken to resolve the conflict by peaceful means.

The Union further reaffirms its full support for the United Nations Special Mission and expresses its appreciation for the intensive work undertaken by the special envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Holl, and his team. They must be given every support in their important task.

The European Union urges all States to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. In particular, the flow of arms into Afghanistan from outside its borders must end.

The European Union also remains concerned about the use of Afghan territory for the production of drugs and the training of terrorists. The European Union reaffirms its commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan. Only negotiation and cooperation between the parties can offer the opportunity for the emergence of a new, stable Afghanistan to which all its people can freely owe allegiance.

No society can achieve an acceptable degree of peace, justice and stability without full respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The European Union calls therefore on all the parties in Afghanistan to act in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and to respect human rights. The European Union can no more accept discrimination on the basis of gender than it can tolerate discrimination on the basis of race or religion. We wish accordingly to express particular concern over the recent measures restricting the education of girls and female employment. We support fully the statements made on 7 October to this effect by the Secretary-General and subsequently by his spokesman, as also the statement made by the High Commissioner for Human Rights on 4 October. We recall in particular that among the instruments formally signed by Afghanistan is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The European Union furthermore condemns without reservation the recent violation of the United Nations office in Kabul. The rights and immunities under international law of the United Nations and its specialized agencies must be fully respected.

Likewise, the security of all international personnel involved in the provision and distribution of humanitarian aid must be guaranteed. The European Union and its member States are the largest donors of aid to Afghanistan. This is a role which we are willing to continue, and we look forward to a dialogue on the modalities of cooperation ensuring assistance for all the people of Afghanistan, irrespective of their gender or ethnic background.

In conclusion, the European Union urgently repeats its call on all parties to cease their armed struggle and to find a peaceful means to resolve their differences. The alternative can only be further destruction and denial of the most basic rights of the Afghan people.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The next speaker is the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, Mr. Sahibzada Muhammad Nazeer Sultan. I welcome him and invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nazeer Sultan (Pakistan): Allow me first to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October and your predecessor for the competent manner in which he presided over the Council last month.

The conflict in Afghanistan continues to rage with intense ferocity, spreading death and destruction and with each passing day assuming an even more ominous dimension for regional peace and security.

The land of Afghanistan, rich in history and culture and proud of its independence, today presents a pathetic picture of turmoil and turbulence. To attribute this to the ambitions of some selfish leaders of Afghan factions or to differences among them would be a travesty of the facts. These ambitions would have been contained and these differences resolved had we not had competing regional and extraregional Powers fuelling the fire and seeking to turn Afghanistan into a battlefield for the pursuit of their own narrow strategic and political interests.

It is easy to dismiss Afghanistan as a failed State or to ascribe the present situation to a civil war engendered by the Afghans themselves. In so doing, the international community may salve its conscience, but the truth is that Afghanistan is neither a failed State nor engaged in a simple civil war. It is a country that was systematically ravaged by long years of foreign military occupation. That occupation was resisted by a heroic people, with the active support and assistance of the free world. It was a resistance rooted in fierce nationalism and in strong religious beliefs. In times of adversity, it is only natural that such beliefs are clung to with greater tenacity. But it was also a fact that, in assisting the struggle against the forces of hegemonism and totalitarianism, the free world deliberately sought to heighten such sentiments.

The war was won. The foreign military occupation ended, but rather than helping the Afghan people to repair the physical, moral and psychological damage done to the land and to the people, the victors and the vanquished walked away, leaving the Afghan people to cope with the internal consequences in a society where traditional structures had been deliberately broken to facilitate the war of liberation. Let us look at the facts.

In April 1978, President Daoud was killed in a *coup d'état* by Nur Mohammad Taraki with the support of the former Soviet Union.

Resistance to his alien Marxist philosophy prompted his replacement by Hafizullah Amin, who initiated an even more alien programme of scientific socialism.

His failure led, in December 1979, to the installation of Babrak Karmal, who arrived in Kabul astride a foreign tank and as the vanguard of a foreign occupation force.

Millions of refugees left Afghanistan, 3.5 million of whom sought shelter in Pakistan and 2 million in Iran, while another 1.5 million were displaced within Afghanistan itself. In short, more than half of Afghanistan's population became refuge seekers.

The Afghan national resistance, supported by the free world, continued for nine years, obliging the alien occupation forces finally to withdraw from Afghanistan on 15 February 1989. The result of that occupation was more than a million Afghans killed, a million more disabled, hundreds of thousands orphaned, towns and villages destroyed, the country's beautiful terrain infested by anti-personnel mines and millions of refugees and displaced persons left homeless and without hope.

The cold war having been won at the expense of Afghan lives, the free world then abandoned Afghanistan with its problems to a fate it does not deserve. The unfurling of the flag of the Islamic State of Afghanistan in April 1992 and the installation of the first mujahidin Government in Afghanistan should have ushered in a process of promoting reconciliation and peace, giving hope and solace to the Afghan people.

President Rabbani was installed as a result of the Islamabad Afghan accord of 7 March 1993, which was subsequently ratified by all Afghan parties in Makkah Al Mukaramah. In the terms of that Accord, Professor Rabbani's term as President of Afghanistan was to end on 28 June 1994. Rabbani's obstinate refusal to step down was the principal factor in the widespread disaffection of the Afghans against his illegitimate regime, whose control of the Afghan State apparatus, always nominal, did not extend to more than five of Afghanistan's 32 provinces.

The continuous efforts of the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to promote intra-Afghan harmony, dialogue and peace produced some

dividends, but these were quickly and deliberately subverted. The Rabbani regime continued to depend for its survival on the massive foreign assistance it received in its efforts to serve competing regional and extraregional interests in Afghanistan at the expense of the Afghan people.

On the other hand, the Afghanistan student militia, popularly known as the Taliban, fed up with factional strife, sought to restore order and relative peace. Through exhortations, it secured the defection of Afghan military commanders and gained control of the two thirds of the country which it now holds.

On 27 September 1996, the Taliban militia entered Kabul. A new interim Government was constituted in Afghanistan. The Taliban affirmed its commitment to promoting peace and solving its problems with General Dostum in the north through negotiations and dialogue.

We have in the past few days witnessed a marked intensification of the conflict, which is again directly attributable to the massive foreign interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

Prompted by their narrow strategic political interests in Afghanistan, regional and extraregional Powers have again chosen to compound the miseries of the Afghan people by fusing alliances and counter-alliances.

Eighteen planeloads of ammunition have landed in Mazar-i-Sharif. Tanks and helicopter gunships are being supplied to factions, and batteries of missiles are being ferried to Bandar Sheikhan. Fleets of AN-12 and AN-32 planes bring deadly weapons each day to replenish the arsenals at Taloqan airfield.

Instead of a concerted regional and international effort under the auspices of the United Nations for the restoration of peace in Afghanistan, what we are witnessing today is a brute power play by those who merely claim to have and those who have no legitimate interest in the unity and territorial integrity of Afghanistan.

It is indeed incredible that the international community is led to believe that, in Afghanistan, a country inhabited by devout Muslims who have lived for centuries in peace with their neighbours, a new ideological threat has been born. It is indeed incredible that, instead of concentrating on ways and means to end the terrible trials and tribulations of the people of Afghanistan, some of us remain preoccupied only with the social aspects of the situation. Others have been more direct in their pronouncements, and have chosen to take a more objective view of the situation, of the threat to peace and security in the region, and of their national interests. We have noted that, among the immediate neighbours of Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan participated in the Almaty summit, which was convened on 4 October 1996 with a view to responding to the developments in Afghanistan. We construe the Almaty statement as an affirmation of the need for the international community, particularly the United Nations, to step up its efforts to promote durable peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan. Indeed, any other course is fraught with grave consequences for peace and stability in South-West and Central Asia.

The time has come for the Security Council to act decisively for the cause of peace in Afghanistan. We hope that this debate will prove to be a milestone in international efforts towards building an international alliance for peace in Afghanistan. Let us act in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Let us use our resources, both material and moral, to overcome the apparent political impasse. Let us act now before it is too late.

Pakistan believes that the Security Council, which had forgotten Afghanistan for almost eight years, must now adopt a binding resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter. We have already circulated to the members of the Council a draft resolution which essentially would have the Council: call for the immediate cessation of all armed hostilities in Afghanistan; demand that all the Afghan parties abide by the ceasefire; support the efforts of the United Nations Special Mission to promote peace and reconciliation; affirm the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan; call upon all States to respect the principles of non-intervention and non-interference in Afghanistan; impose an immediate arms embargo on Afghanistan; and establish a monitoring mechanism to verify compliance with the ceasefire and the arms embargo. We are sanguine that the Secretary General and the members of the international community, individually and collectively, as well as in cooperation with other concerned organizations such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference, will be able to mobilize the necessary personnel and resources for enhancing United Nations efforts for peace in Afghanistan and for implementing such a resolution. It is also evident that the international humanitarian relief effort must be stepped up to care for the victims of the

conflict, as well as for the millions of Afghan refugees in neighbouring countries.

Pakistan is committed to supporting the efforts of the United Nations Special Mission, and of the Security Council, to restore peace in Afghanistan. We have stood with our Afghan brothers in times of adversity. We have shared the sufferings of our Afghan brothers. The situation in Afghanistan continues to impact severely on Pakistan. We have no favourites in Afghanistan. We firmly believe that only an intra-Afghan political process, leading to the setting up of a broad-based government, will allow durable peace to return to that troubled land. We are ready to cooperate with all members of the international community, and particularly with the immediate neighbours of Afghanistan, with a view to harmonizing our efforts to promote peace and tranquillity in Afghanistan and our region.

We recognize the State of Afghanistan. We have done business with every regimes in Kabul, regardless of whether it was led by Nur Mohammad Taraki, Hafizullah Amin, Mojadedi or Rabbani. We desire normal, mutually beneficial relations with Afghanistan. For centuries we have shared with the Afghan people, ties of blood, history, culture and religion. It is therefore incumbent on us and on all freedom-loving people of the world to renew our pledge to support the Afghan people in restoring peace and rebuilding their country. It is incumbent on all of us to respect and uphold the unity and territorial integrity of Afghanistan. Indeed, this is a commitment which flows from the Charter of the United Nations, which the Security Council is especially obliged to uphold.

It is important that all States Members of the United Nations enhance their efforts to obtain an objective understanding of the grim realities in Afghanistan. This can only be done by first-hand contact with the people of Afghanistan. It can only be done by listening to all views in Afghanistan. It can only be done by affirming political support and pledging material support for the efforts being made by the Special Mission under the able leadership of Mr. Norbert Holl.

It is our fervent wish that this important debate in the Council on the situation in Afghanistan will conclude by the adoption of an appropriate draft resolution by the Council.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I thank the distinguished Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan for the kind words he addressed to me.

The distinguished Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan has asked to make a statement, and I call upon him now.

Mr. Ghafoorzhi (Afghanistan): In the name of the bereaved Afghan nation, I wish to extend gratitude to all those who took part in today's meeting and expressed their support for the cause of peace and stability in Afghanistan either on behalf of their countries or, as in the case of Italy and Ireland, on behalf of a group of countries. I remind those who expressed their disapproval of the continuation of the conflict in our country that we supported talks and negotiations to take the place of military confrontation and lead to the formation of a broad-based government of national unity representing every Afghan side.

Certainly, a military solution will not solve the crisis in Afghanistan. All the Afghan sides must have realized this. The occupation of a city, on the one hand, or the repulsion of force on the other cannot solve the problem in an intermingled society such as ours, particularly not in the face of increasingly widespread foreign intervention.

We believe that all sides must abstain from the search for unilateral, monopoly power. All sides must consider the other parties to the Afghan conflict to be equal and fraternal. So that equality can reign in the future political life of Afghanistan, each party should be able to guarantee and secure their political independence, national unity and territorial integrity through the civilized practice of negotiations.

But we cannot improve the situation if the Taliban continues to reject any viable solution to the problem — and it is the only side in the conflict to do so. As far as Islamic status is concerned, we have always steadfastly supported that principle, whether we were in a strong position or a defensive posture, because we believe that this path is beneficial to the higher interests of our country and of our people. Surely, the record of the United Nations Special Mission for Afghanistan shows this.

Moreover, now and in the past we have always accorded special importance to the role of the United Nations Special Mission. It would not be far from the truth to say that the Islamic State of Afghanistan has been one of the parties that has been most cooperative with the Special Mission. We highly value the good offices of His Excellency the Secretary-General and His Excellency

Mr. Norbert Holl's tireless efforts as a friend of the Afghan people. The emphasis at this crucial juncture is on further strengthening the Special Mission, as suggested in our proposed draft resolution, distributed this morning. This is indicative of our belief in the competence and capability of the Special Mission and of the facilities that it has at its disposal to promote an early return of peace to war-shattered Afghanistan.

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan made some remarks in his statement that call for some brief response. The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan once again reaffirmed his country's attitude and position of not having a one-sided approach towards the groups and parties in Afghanistan.

Permit me once again briefly to state what happened just yesterday, as I mentioned in my statement this morning. After General Dostum joined the Government of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, the Pakistani Interior Minister, Mr. Babar, flew to Mazar-i-Sharif yesterday to meet General Dostum. We are not sure what was discussed in that meeting, but one subject we are sure was not raised with General Dostum was congratulations on his decision to join the Islamic State of Afghanistan headed by Mr. Rabbani. It must have been quite to the contrary.

It should be remembered that the Pakistani authorities have always said they have a policy of according no preferential treatment to any Afghan side. In this very explosive and volatile situation, I wonder if any member of the Council would consider such a trip on the part of the Interior Minister of Pakistan to Kabul and then to Mazar-i-Sharif and then finally to Kandahar, the headquarters of the Taliban, anything but a contradiction of the claim that has been made. The immediate implication of this trip is that it can only exacerbate the conflict. Is this not interference? How else could it be described other than as a gesture that is provocative and destructive to intra-Afghan dialogue.

Mr. Nasirullah Babar would know that he is not the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan and responsible for coordinating policies in support of its subordinates, the Taliban. His trip as Interior Minister of Pakistan must mean something other than was explained.

In brief, I should like to say that the people of Afghanistan, who enjoy deep-rooted religious, historical and cultural ties and bonds of brotherhood with the people of Pakistan, still appreciate the assistance of our Pakistani brothers and sisters during the 14 years of our rightful jihad and national struggle. All this means that the Pakistani representative should do something better than continue to deny the negative role of his authorities in the Afghan conflict..

Ironically, in his statement before the Security Council this afternoon, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan blames the continued conflict on the interference of others. I would just like to respond to the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan by referring to the saying about the fox in the coop, with eggs and the chicken in his mouth, blaming the cow in the field for causing the chicken to cry out.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): There are no further speakers.

The next meeting of the Security Council to continue the consideration of the item on the agenda will be fixed in consultation with the members of the Council.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.